SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 430. FOR WEEK ENDING MARCH 27TH, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

THE "COMMEMORATION SOUVENIR" REDUCTION SALE.

1837] [1897.

Now that Queen Victoria has reigned longer than any other British Monarch, every loyal subject will agree that a most suitable epoch has arrived for manifesting our loyalty. This event we have distinguished by a "Commemoration Souvenir" Reduction Sale of our "Queen's Royal" Household Carpets and Hearthrugs, &c., at about ONE-HALF their original prices. The "QUEEN'S ROYAL" Carpets have doubled their sales during the past year. They are impervious to dust; the dirt cannot penetrate them.

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6ft. „ 12ft.	10 6	9ft. „ 13½ft.	16 6	12ft. „ 15ft.	25 6
9ft. „ 9ft.	11 0	10½ft. „ 12ft.	18 0	12ft. „ 18ft.	30 0
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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON.

No. 430.] For the Week ending March 27th, 1897. [ONE PENNY.

New Serial Story.] **[Starts To-day.**

By the Author of "Danesford," etc.

CHAPTER I.

DESPITE THE WORLD.

A cosy villa stood in one of those old-fashioned winding roads to the north of Regent's Park, where town and country dispute supremacy. Here the buzz of the mighty city sounds but dimly, and yet a whistle blown shrilly will bring a hansom to the garden gate almost before the echoes have died away. It lay back some distance from the road, shadowed by spreading trees, encased in shrubs.

The tiny garden in front was gay with bright geraniums and calceolarias planted in prim rows. The patch of grass by the trimly-kept gravel path was still green and bright, and overhead the pale, full moon shed silver gleams upon leaf and stem, upon flower and weed alike. No town garden looks so well as by moonlight, and on a fair June evening this made-up townly plot vied with its wilder country cousins in beauty.

Within the villa, in a comfortable if small room on the ground floor, a man and woman were seated at the dinner table, from which Thomas, most discreet of men, had just removed the plates and dishes of a more than usually elaborate meal.

It was to be the last these two would enjoy there. The remembrance of many a pleasant meal came to him as absently he sipped his coffee, and, staring straight before him, doubted the possibility of carrying out his resolve.

She was very beautiful, masses of auburn hair graced a well-poised head, large dreamy brown eyes, which upon occasion would flash darkly, but which could, as he well knew, kindle with the warm glow of love, a graceful figure, a good presence—yes, he knew it all; he delighted to call it all to mind, though he dare not meet her eyes. Another charm was hers, that of a sweet, deep, musical voice—a voice as limpid as falling water, a voice once heard never forgotten. Involuntarily a sigh escaped him.

"Why, Roy!" she laughed, "why that sigh? It was quite tragic. Do you meditate some dark deed? What murder is afoot? Ha, ha!"

"You know, Nelly, how I loathe this parting. You know how you have grown into my life, but you do not care as I do. If I sighed it was because I wish this thing had not to be—wish it, aye, with all my heart! But you mock me, chaff about tragedy, and cry: 'Ha, ha!'"

"You are to be married," she interrupted, stealing a glance at him sideways.

"Exactly. I am to be married. I must, I am told, or be ruined."

"And this lady, this Miss Arbuthnot—your cousin, is she not?—has lots of money, and they say is simply lovely."

He laughed vexedly. It was bad enough to marry to order, but to be jeered at, and by her of all people, made it worse.

"You know she is plain in my eyes," he said bitterly. "I have no voice in the matter. The governor says—oh, you know what he would say, and there is an end of it!"

"Yes, I suppose so," Nelly answered wearily; "and an end of our friendship."

"Our what, Nelly?" he asked in wonder.

"Best call things by their true names. Friendship in these days means something to exist so long as is convenient. I had a friend once, Roy, a school chum; we vowed eternal love; by-the-way, you and I did that! She and I never speak now. When I came here, she—well—you know—her people. Of course, they could do nothing else."

"And I have taken you from friends, ruined your life."

"Now, my dear Roy, how many times have I told you not to talk to me in that strain. Ruin! nonsense! Where was I when we met? You remember, left dependent upon the charity of distant relatives who grudged the daughter of a spendthrift the slight assistance they gave. My life—I shudder when I think of it. No encouragement, no help,

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no love, but poorly-veiled sneers, covert sarcasms; possibly well meant, but none the less cold lectures on the necessity of strict economy. And each time ending with: 'My dear, thank God we can help you, even if we stint ourselves to do it. It is our duty.' It was that last, that pharisaical patting on the back, that made my blood boil—stint themselves! Not they; there was no need. It was what Charley Duff calls 'kid.' And then the family prayers, the daily church, parish visiting, intruding upon those who did not want us, but did want blankets and soup for nothing, and who laughed behind our backs. It was too humdrum, too irksome, oh! it was hideous. And then, Roy, I met you. I was taken from it all. I saw life free from conventional trammels. And here I am. Free! think of that—the hideous past is past. Do not go back to it at our last meeting. This remember: that whatever happens, I will never say, or think, you ruined me."

"And you do love me, Nelly?"

"You know I do, but what is the use of that? We part to-night."

"Unless when I am married——"

"No, no, for your sake, Roy—we must be strangers. You and I strangers, Roy!" and she laughed lightly. What it cost her to do so he never knew.

"You don't seem to care much," he muttered as he had done before.

"We must look the inevitable in the face. You must marry, we must part."

"The force of that remark is evident, if unpleasant," he answered shortly.

"Now do not embitter our parting; let us remain friends, Roy."

Absently to appearance, but, perhaps, with design, she took a rose from a magnificent cluster before them, and fixed it in her dress, where its deep red colour burned in glowing contrast with the delicate white of her shoulders.

And fixed it in her dress.

"Who gave you those roses, Nelly?"

"Charley Duff."

"You see him often, it seems. It is always Charley Duff. Do you like him?"

"Yes," she answered simply, as she drew the epergne towards her and pressed her face against the flowers.

There was a pause, he hesitated to ask the question which trembled on his lips. He glanced across the table, but she busied herself in deftly rearranging the roses and would not look up.

What delicate taper fingers she had, he mused, what well rounded arms, what a goddess upon earth, as she sat toying with the flowers. It pained him, for she was going out of his life. Impatiently he asked: "And when I am gone?"

"Perhaps! He is going round the world in his yacht. He has money and is a gentleman. What can I do?"

"You make your arrangements quickly," he said bitterly.

"You leave me, Roy. I do not blame you. Why should you be angry with me?" she answered in dead, dull tones.

He drummed the table angrily with his fingers, but did not answer. Perhaps he did not hear the question, the tone of voice struck him, the words were unheeded. There was a heavy despair in her face, her arms rested listlessly on the table, that joyous ring in her voice, which he knew so well, was absent. The thought of what she was about to do hurt his vanity, cut him to the quick; it was a stab indeed.

Never had she been so dear as now, and he had lost her. The coming separation was his doing, to advance his interests. He cursed the necessity, but recognised the force of circumstances. He could not blame her and would not. He knew she did not wish to leave him, the sad yearning in her eyes told him that, but it must be.

The end must come, and he thought bitterly, the sooner the better. Pride came to his rescue, an ungovernable cruelty for the moment mastered his better instincts. He ignored the hopeless tone, the unshed tears, and caught at the cold words.

"And you learn to forget quickly, too," he said with a harsh, bitter laugh.

"Roy!"

It was all she said, but the anguish it conveyed made him shiver. It made him feel, as no passionate outburst could have done, what a cad he had been. He sprang from his chair and wound his arms round her, pressing her head against him as he kissed her passionately.

"Nelly, I am mad—I did not know what I said. Forgive me, darling. The thought of losing you makes me a brute. Heavens! what am I to do?"

Nelly quivered in his embrace, and, as he released her and walked up and down the room with quick, impetuous steps, sank her head upon her arms and burst into tears. The high tension at which her nerves were strung gave way; she had played a part, assumed an indifference, at what mental agony he did not guess even now. But she could keep it up no longer. His taunt had broken down her self-control. She had passed from one extreme to the other, and was now but a sobbing, broken-hearted woman.

Roy Arbuthnot paused in his tramping, and looked across at her grievedly. He had brought on this scene, he had made this parting, for parting it must be, so bitter. It was his folly, his stupid vanity. He saw now, when it was too late, how true she was to him, and how she would have saved him pain. And now she had given way, she was crying as if her heart had broken, as indeed it had. She would never love another man. He could bear it no longer. Few men can bear to see a woman cry. He crossed to her side, and again drew her to him.

"Nelly, my darling, look at me. Say you forgive. I was not sane when I said that."

She smiled through her tears; she could not resist.

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"Roy, you know I love you. I cannot let you go. If you leave me now I shall die. You stabbed me when you said that. But you do love me, Roy. Must we part? It will

She smiled through her tears.

kill me. Stay with me. I will be your slave. I will work. I will earn money. You know I have talent. I will do anything to keep you by my side. In other lands, Roy, away from old associations, I will prove what a woman's love can do. You and I will go together through life. I love you. Ah! Roy, I can say no more than that. I love you. You must not leave me. My heart is breaking."

He was carried away. "No," he said, "whatever happens, no!"

The colour mounted to her cheeks once more, she stood on tiptoe, and as the old saucy smile came back to her lips, she drew his head down and kissed him again and again.

Then she plucked Charlie Duff's rose from her bosom and threw it in the fire grate with a gesture of disdain.

"And the others also," laughed Roy, suiting the action to the word and flinging them, stand and all, into the hearth, where the glass shivered into fragments.

CHAPTER II.

Love and Interest.

Seated upon the balcony at White's, behind the gay lines of Marguerite daisies and glowing red geraniums, Roy Arbuthnot absently sucked the stump of a cigar which had been out some minutes.

His thoughts were far away, the passing traffic had no interest for him. He saw a tear-stained but radiant face looking up to him, he felt soft arms round his neck, he heard a tender voice cooing love, but he was miserably, utterly wretched.

A letter lay open in his hand. His father had written to say that failing to catch him at his chambers he would look in at White's at one o'clock, and requesting that Roy would lunch with him, as there were several things he wished to discuss.

Roy knew what that meant—he must marry. The bride-to-be was ready, and he was expected to fall in with an arrangement already cut and dried. The world would say it was a good match. He, the heir to large estates—if encumbered—and to the baronetcy; she, possessed of great wealth, an amiable woman, well born, of equal rank; he had no excuse. But how unattractive she was!

How unlike Nelly! There was the rub. Nelly with beauty and ruin, Mary with—well—money; and money he must have. But a few hours ago and he had sworn, come what might, he and Nelly should go hand in hand through life, and now his father's note brought him up with a run. So, round and round, his thoughts sped. Passion, love on the one hand, prudence, self-interest on the other. He was in a mood to be swayed. He felt he was weak, vacillating.

Had Nelly been by his side, her voice, her presence would have been decisive. Little pleading on her part would have been necessary. He would then and there have cast the future to the wind, and she and he would have started for the other side of the world. But she was not, and he unwillingly weighed possibilities.

It all came back to one point, Nelly and ruin, Mary and respectability. And he must choose to-day. He must think, and he hated thought. It made him feel old. He could get no further, the position was hopeless. In extremity he turned with pleasure as an old friend stepped out on the balcony.

"Ah! Jack, the very man of all others I would like to talk to. Sit down, old man, and give one the benefit of your varied experience. I am in a hole."

"What is it, Roy? You are demonstrative this morning."

"Simply this," Roy answered quickly. "You know Nelly, yes, of course you do. The governor knows nothing of that—eh? why do you laugh?"

"Does he not? Why, he chuckled about your friendship—as he was pleased to call it—only yesterday—laughed, and said of course such a friendship was part of the being of every young man. A natural result of having nothing much to do in the world."

"The old rip!' But here is the trouble. The dad now insists that I must marry. I tell you, Jack, I love her and cannot marry."

Jack Sinclair laughed a low, amused chuckle as he blew a cloud of cigarette smoke from his lips.

"The old, old tale, Roy. The lady must go out of

A letter lay open in his hand.

your life. She won't break her heart, my boy. Your heart, doctored with seven thousand a year—that is about the figure, is it not?—will not cease its beating."

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"I did not expect this cheap cynicism from you, Jack. I asked you as a friend, what am I to do? And you answer me with aphorisms replete with the wit of the halfpenny evening journal."

Jack Sinclair laughed delightedly.

"Really, Roy, you are amusing this morning. I wish Bathurst were here; your tragic air would afford him a story at many a table. He would find himself possessed of a really humourous idea, which, to do him full justice, is not often his lot, and he would make the most of it. I can see him now spreading the news broadcast. Scene: Roy, despondent; enter irate parent; the fair Nelly—clever actress—in tears, the *ingénue* in the background, who advances to the footlights; they—that is, you and she—embrace; exit Nelly, melodramatically; curtain. My dear Roy, it would bring down the house. He would introduce that sentence about the halfpenny evening journal with great effect."

"Ridicule then, and nothing but ridicule," Roy said vexedly.

"From me, now, nothing else. It won't do, Roy. You have in this to fall into line. You are on the coach, but your father drives. You've got to submit. For the lady, well, she must shift for herself. Don't you worry about that. She will do it."

Blew a cloud of cigarette-smoke from his lips.

"That is all very well, but I tell you again, I love Nelly, and have no wish to marry. Life as it has been, has satisfied me. Why should I marry?"

"Necessity, my boy. You've got to the end of your tether. You know that. Creditors are, to those in our position, most accommodating, foolishly so perhaps, but when the dun fails to get the bit on account for which his soul longs, he, like the proverbial worm, turns at last. You know, Roy, several have turned already, have in fact become sea-serpents in voracity. And really the lady is very charming."

"That is the worst of it, Jack. Mary is such a charming girl that when I think of her sacrifice I know I am a brute. I can never feel to her as to Nelly, it is no use trying to persuade myself, and the worst of it is, her glorious voice reminds me so of Nelly. Never did two women speak so alike. I shall always hear Nelly and see Mary. And then Nelly will break her heart. For Heaven's sake tell me what I am to do. I revile myself and everybody when I try to think."

"You know what I think—marriage. I mean no disrespect to Nelly when I say she will find consolation. Many another has been similarly placed. Not one has broken her heart. They cry, may be act the heroic, but acquire a new possession, and in conquest find recompense. Why, she may have someone in view already. Eh! you start—tell me!"

Roy started vexedly, and then as the other pressed for an explanation, told how Nelly had mentioned Charley Duff and his proposed trip, and how it had piqued him.

"A lesson for you, Roy; take it to heart," sneered Jack Sinclair. "Charley knows his book, and she would, I am sure, be a charming companion for a trip of that sort. She played her cards well and she held the fifth honour."

"Don't tell me she was not in earnest," Roy answered hotly. "I will not believe it."

Jack laughed. "All right, as you will. But here comes your father. He won't want me. He wants to talk to his dutiful son. If I can help, let me know; I mean it. I am at your call, but *I* say do not thwart the old man."

"A bit brutal, I fear," muttered Sinclair to himself, "but I had to hit hard."

As he disappeared through one of the windows which opened on to the balcony, Sir Richard Arbuthnot advanced with sprightly steps to where his son was sitting.

The baronet was a well-groomed man of fifty, who looked from his glossy silk hat, set jauntily on the side of his head, to his shiny boots, what he was—a *blasé*, cynical man of the world. Roy got from him his good looks, for Sir Richard, or Dick, as his intimates called him always, had been in his younger days a distinctly handsome man. Even now his iron grey hair was abundant, his eyes still retained their fire, and if his face was lined and tired-looking, he aged well. Slim in figure, holding himself erect, he stepped through life briskly, and cast off easily the worries which came his way.

"Well, Roy, I have run you to earth at last," he said smilingly, showing a set of white, even teeth, of which many a younger man might well have been proud. "And I am hungry; let us have some lunch. Breakfast with me this morning consisted of one piece of dry toast and a B. and S. We were late last night."

"And the usual luck?" asked Roy, with some little disdain, for, like many a son, he thought his father should long ago have ceased to sow those oats which bear no crop.

"Yes, luck has been with me lately what you neatly describe as usual. It will change, no doubt, but last night it was—well, the English language is singularly deficient—let it pass."

"And this has prompted you to tell me once more that I must marry Mary," Roy put in hotly. "You have lost, and I am to square accounts."

"Do not state things so bluntly, Roy. It is vulgar. Nothing is so misleading as a fact, and generally a fact unnecessarily irritates; it requires to be handled with some skill. Now put it in a different setting. You are heir to large estates, an old name. You may say that the property is mortgaged to the hilt. You may even say that I am responsible for that. You seem in a mood to do so. By-the-bye, you should not sup so late, it warps one's judgment in the morning. I speak from experience, and for once you might admit I may be right. But to return, when your grandfather died he left the estates as—as in fact they are now. I married, married well, and in consequence have had a good time. Your good mother occupied the eminently useful position of being a woman with money. And she had more to recommend her than that. She was a woman of the world, she did not expect me to remain tied to her side like a lap dog by a string. As a consequence, you know that we have sailed through life pleasantly, not expecting too much and so not disappointed. I only ask you to profit by my experience. As I have been happy, why should not you? Mary is a charming girl."

"But I do not wish to marry."

"Neither did I, Roy. I thought as I dare say you do, that I was well content. Debts would be paid—some time. Things would right themselves—somehow. Why worry about it immediately? 'Enough to the day is the evil thereof,' and so on. The old, old complaint, my boy. My

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father put the position to me frankly as I do to you. His views were not my views. The idea of a hum-drum married

Sir Richard waited.

life had no attraction for me. Still, he was right, as I soon found out. I married for money and have never regretted the step. Your mother is a woman in a thousand and——"

"But I tell you I love Nelly."

"Now, Roy! ask yourself what do you mean by love? Do you know any case, outside a novel, where man, for years, finds one woman perfect? In my reading days the hero and heroine were always left in the happiness of anticipation upon the altar steps. No account was given of the trials of every-day married life. The author dare not. The romance would be lost in the inability to pay expenses, or in the thousand and one events which make love, as the idealist writes of it, a dream of the past. Now if you marry without this so-called love, which after all only blinds you to the imperfections of one woman in particular, you do not start from so high a platform, and the descent to every-day common-sense is gradual and easy—love is imaginative and seldom outlasts many years of cold reality. Sincere affection and honest admiration will; and your cousin is a most charming girl."

"I know that, and there is the trouble. She is in every way too good for me."

"Tell her so, Roy. She will like that. Women can always appreciate praise, flattery. They may protest, but they like it all the same. And, seriously, something must be done. Creditors are pressing on all hands. If it were known that you were about to contract a wealthy marriage, the cormorants would cease to be voracious. Now, they would try to digest even the stone and mortar of our old home; all our difficulties would be at an end. I have not stinted you in the past, Roy, and you must admit you have drawn upon me freely. Now I appeal to you. It is not as if I asked you to marry an impossible woman; Mary is fond of you, she is charming, has all the good qualities, and so on. There is no reason why you should not be happy. Ruin, Roy, ruin; think of it for your mother's sake—even for mine."

"And Nelly, what of her?" Roy asked helplessly.

"I think we may leave that lady out of the account," his father answered drily, as if that side of the question were not worthy of discussion.

Roy rose hurriedly from the table, and paced quickly up and down the balcony outside. He felt stifled indoors. His father's mixture of cynicism and worldly common-sense disgusted while it convinced him. He would have liked to have hurled reproaches at his head, to have laid bare the selfish indifference to his feelings, the better instincts which he possessed; but he knew his father had acted a part, prompted by necessity which must be faced. It could only end in a row, what was the use? He knew his father well enough to realise that he would throw off with an easy indifference any reproaches levelled at him. His answer would be: "Go and do as I did." Again, what was the use? Poor Nelly! He had already in his mind called her poor Nelly, and it broke from him involuntarily. Must she be put aside that he might live in ease and comfort? But then, his mother! that gentle woman whose life, as he knew, had been not entirely free from trouble, who had, for the name of the family into which she had married, submitted to many slights, who loved him with a mother's love for an only son—her future, her happiness, depended upon his decision. It was maddening.

He strode up and down angrily. He had forgotten his father, who still sat at the luncheon table and watched keenly the figure of his son as he passed the window time and again with bowed head and contracted brows.

Sir Richard waited, but still Roy walked the balcony with quick, impatient strides.

At last he left the room silently, but he mused: "It is a facer for the lad. I went through it, so must he. Curious how events repeat. We Arbuthnots have lived for generations by marriage."

(To be continued.)

RESULT OF ASTERISK LETTER COMPETITION.

No. 2.

Several competitors correctly filled in the letters omitted in this competition, and the prize has consequently been forwarded to the sender of the first to hand, who is Miss E. Corbett, The Cottage, Little Park, Enfield. The sentence is appended:

Anon, however, when of a sudden they all came upon Damaris herself, seated with her woollen work in a grassy hollow, with rocks between her and the sun, the Layton youth had to change his mind abruptly. The light of recognition in the girl's fair face made him think the king's commissioner might even be his rival.

Result of Watch Competition.

No. 1.

The correct time in the Watch Competition, No. 1, was 1hr. 27min. Mr. W. Mottershead, 17, Norfolk Street, Hyde, Cheshire, alone correctly named this time, and the Five Guinea Watch has consequently been forwarded to him.

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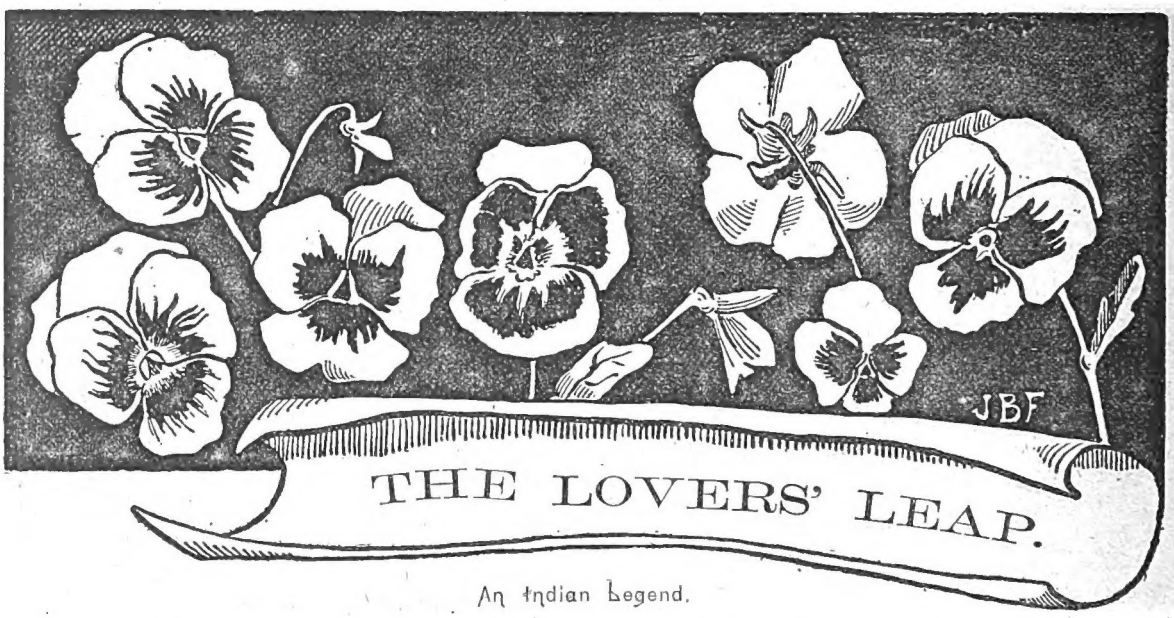

THE LOVERS' LEAP.

An Indian Legend.

On the mountain of the prairie;
By the great pipestone quarry.

Longfellow could not have expressed the truth in fewer words than he did in his poem "Hiawatha," in describing this great plateau or coleau in the southern part of Minnesota. This rocky ridge extends from a north-easterly to a south-westerly direction and forms a great watershed, the Big Sioux river draining it from the west and small tributaries of the Mississippi from the east. The sacred pipestone found only at this point made it the Mecca of all the Indian tribes once inhabiting that vast region of the West and North-West Territory.

During the warm months of June, July, and August of each year scenes of great festivities were held on and about this sacred spot by the various tribes which assembled there to obtain supplies of this wonderful and precious stone; at which time all nations, from the crafty and treacherous Blackfeet, who then inhabited the vast plains of Kansas and Nebraska, to the more phlegmatic Sioux, Dakotas, and Flandreaus, whose home was in Minnesota and Dakota, were gathered here on terms of friendship.

On these occasions all feuds and animosities were laid aside, and with the "calumet," or "pipe of peace," fashioned from the stone to be found only at that point, they pledged a temporary peace to be broken only when they again separated and returned to their distant hunting grounds.

Stretching up and down the gently sloping valley, round the beautiful little lakes, were orderly-arranged villages; each tribe occupying a separate location, but all being so arranged in a circle as to leave an unobstructed tract of ground in the centre, on which festivities, games, and sports of all kinds were held, as well as the graver councils of the great chiefs.

Among the many tribes gathered on this occasion was a branch of the Dakotas, under the chieftainship of Bison Head, an Indian noted throughout that territory as a man of great bravery, and who had received his appellation from the fact that he constantly wore the skin of a buffalo with the horns intact, as a trophy of a hand-to-hand encounter he once had with the owner, a huge bull, and in which he came out victorious.

But the fame of Bison Head was second only to that of his daughter, Wahoe, whose beauty and accomplishments had set the hearts of many young braves of his own people, as well as those of surrounding tribes, in a flutter. Up to the present time, however, no dusky warrior had succeeded in winning more than a smile from the maiden.

As the days went by and the younger portion of the inhabitants of that little temporary village spent their time in sports, while the older heads sat round the camp fires and told of deeds of valour done by them in days gone by, it became evident that there would be trouble among some of the more ardent admirers of the fair Wahoe, who as yet received all the attention lavished upon her by the different youths, but had shown no preference, unless it was for the society and attentions of Fleetfoot, a young chief of the Blackfeet tribe, and Big Wolf, chief of the Sioux.

As was to be expected, a fierce rivalry soon sprang up between the two impetuous chiefs, which, but for the interference of more sober heads, would have led to open hostilities between them on many occasions.

It is not to be supposed that Bison Head was ignorant of what was going on, but up to this time he had only been an interested observer, knowing full well that his daughter was capable of choosing for herself, and would tell him of her decision when it was made. But as the open hostility of the two chiefs became more evident each day, and knowing full well what dire results would follow any conflict between the two, he at last addressed Wahoe:

"Does the daughter of the great Bison Head desire to make trouble between the two young chiefs, by giving neither an answer to his suit?"

"No, great chief, my father; but Wahoe does not know to which she will give her heart. Both chiefs are brave, and Wahoe does not wish to wound the heart of one by leaving the lodge of my father and going to that

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of the other. Will my father tell Wahoe how to decide?"

"My daughter must do that for herself, Bison Head will not command his daughter. Both Fleetfoot and Big Wolf are brave young chiefs, and worthy to enter the lodge of Bison Head and bear away his child to their own people. The Blackfeet are no more our friends than are the Sioux, and both are powerful tribes. If any daughter wants to depart to the distant lodge of Fleetfoot, 'tis well; but if she would prefer to remain nearer to her own people, and enter the lodge of the Sioux chief, Bison Head would be pleased. Your father has now spoken; his daughter must decide."

After her father's departure, Wahoe sat for a long time without any visible signs of life, except an occasional sigh which escaped her. Finally an idea seemed to have gained possession of her; for she suddenly rose, passed quickly from her lodge to that of her father. On entering the tent of Bison Head she immediately said:

"My father, I have decided. Do you see the high rock which stands near to where the water falls over the ledge, and which looks so much like the face of a great chief?"

"Yes, my daughter; but what does my child expect to do; throw herself from its top into the water below, and in that way end the strife between the two young chiefs?"

"No, my father; Wahoe loves life too well to hurry herself to the land of the Great Spirit by doing anything so rash. But Fleetwood and Big Wolf are both brave and daring, and have told me they would do anything to show how much they love me, and as your daughter's heart cannot decide which chief she will go with, I have come to tell my father that I will test the love of both. You can tell them that Wahoe will go to the lodge of the brave who will leap from the big rocks to that lone rock and return my moccasin, which I will have my brother place there. Does my father like the plan of his daughter?"

"'Tis well," replied the chief, "I will tell Fleetwood and Big Wolf how my daughter has decided."

It took but a few hours for the news of the test given by Wahoe to be carried throughout the numerous tribes on the plain, after Bison Head had called the two chiefs before him, and given them his daughter's ultimatum.

Both gallant braves acquiesced in the plan of the maiden, although they knew it might mean death or terrible injuries to them to attempt the feat, should they fail to accomplish it, as the leap had never yet been made by man.

The rock in question was a tall piece of granite standing like a lone sentinel about fifteen feet from the main ledge, overlooking the falls, and was about thirty or forty in height, having evidently been detached from the main ledge by some volcanic convulsion of past ages. As the space on top of this boulder was only about a foot square, it will be readily seen that a man must be sure-footed if he landed on its top and retained his footing. This fact, more than the distance, made the jump so dangerous.

It was decided by the Bison Head that the contest should take place at the going down of the sun on the following day.

As the attentions of the two young chiefs to Wahoe were well known to all the Indians assembled, the

The Spring Double Number of *Home Notes* appears on Saturday, March 27th. In it will be found an article on "The Queen's Religion and Sunday Observances"; and particulars of a Grand Competition, in which a bicycle is given away. A Paper Pattern will be presented with each number.

announcement of the dangerous contest between the two was the one exciting theme talked of that night and next day in the tents of the red men.

As a possible safeguard to the future of the untutored savage, both young chiefs spent the entire night alone in their tents, chanting their death song, that they might be prepared to enter the happy hunting grounds should they meet their death in attempting their love test.

On the following day, as the sun began to sink towards the home of Fleetfoot, the plain below the falls and the space on the rocks above were lined with the various Indians, all excited and interested in the result of the contest.

As the hour for the trial drew near the excitement increased; but when the two chiefs came up from their tents, followed by Bison Head and Wahoe, a silence as of death pervaded that vast multitude.

When they arrived at the scene of the contest, Bison Head thus addressed the young chiefs:

"Fleetfoot, chief of the daring and swift-footed Blackfeet, and Big Wolf, chief of the great and powerful Sioux, you both desire that the daughter of Bison Head shall leave the lodge of her father, and enter yours to cook your food, and care for you when you return from the chase. The daughter of Bison Head is greatly honoured that she should win the love of the two such brave and powerful chiefs; but she is young, and does not know her heart. Knowing of your bravery and great abilities, she decided to give you this test. He who shall succeed shall take Wahoe to his lodge. Bison Head has spoken. Let each chief prepare to take the trial."

An arrow was shot into the air by one of the other young chiefs assembled, it being agreed that should it fall point downwards, Fleetfoot should be the first to attempt the feat; if otherwise, Big Wolf should be the first. The arrow fell at a short distance, and struck the ground, penetrating it several inches, where it stood, quivering in the earth, with the feather pointing upwards.

No sooner was its position announced, when Fleetfoot

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prepared to make the leap to either a bride, dishonour, or death. He walked to the brink of the precipice, and measured with his keen eye the distance from where he stood to the small space on top of the rock, on which lay the object of his leap, the beautifully embroidered moccasin of Wahoe.

Then, with one glance into the depths below, as if to see where he would strike should he fail to secure a foothold, he gradually stepped backward a few feet in order to give his body a little impetus before attempting the leap.

Not a sound could be heard from that vast multitude gathered on the rocks above or the plain below; the occasion seemed too solemn, all present knowing full well the result of the young chief's leap should he not calculate correctly the distance, and jump either too far or fail to jump far enough.

The suspense was of but a moment's duration, however, as the body of the young chief was seen to shoot out into space, after a short run, as he made the leap.

He had judged the distance correctly, and landed fairly and squarely on the small space on the rock. A mighty shout went up from those assembled, which was immediately followed by a cry of horror, as the form of the young chief was seen to sway backwards and forwards, and suddenly plunge headlong down among the sharp and jagged rocks forty feet below, where he lay a mass of broken bones and quivering flesh.

Before assistance could reach the unfortunate chief, a cry went up from those on the rocks above, caused by the form of Big Wolf, which shot down to the brink of the precipice and out towards the fatal rock. He had failed to gauge the distance as accurately as his rival; and this fact, together with the fearful and as yet unknown results of Fleetfoot's leap, caused him to just strike the edge of the rock, but not sufficient to gain a foothold. His body swayed backwards!

He endeavoured to grasp the edges of the projecting rock with his hands, but his efforts were in vain, and with an agonising cry he fell through the air and struck on the rocks below, only a few feet from where his rival lay quivering in the agonies of death.

The cry that now went up was heartrending, and a rush was made by those on the plain below, who were near where the two chiefs had fallen, to assist them if possible.

But the awful tragedy was not yet ended. When Fleetfoot had made his fearful jump and his body was seen to plunge into the depths below, Wahoe had uttered an agonising cry and hidden her face in her hands, to shut out the sight of anything so fearful. She only uncovered her face when the second awful shout went up at Big Wolf's unsuccessful attempt, only in time to see him vainly endeavouring to gain a foothold, and then with his despairing glance disappear from sight.

In an instant her shrieks could be heard by everybody, and before those near her divined what her intentions were, she had rushed to the edge of the precipice and, after gazing for an instant into the depths below, she plunged headlong from the rocks.

Those near rushed to where she had stood but a moment before, only in time to see her body strike on the cruel rocks below, directly between the bodies of the two chiefs.

The uproar among those wild savages was something terrible and appalling. Bison Head would have leaped after his daughter had he not been restrained by some of his band.

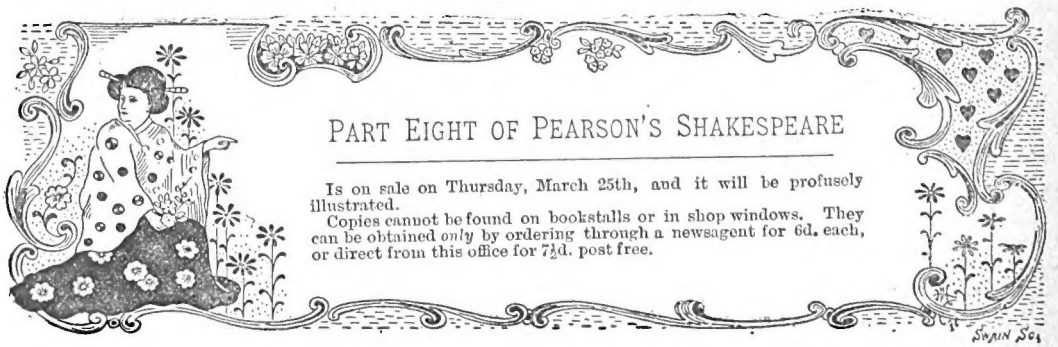
It was but a few moments before a surging mass was surrounding the fatal spot where lay the two chiefs and the maiden. Wahoe and Big Wolf were both dead, the latter having struck on the back of his head, crushing the skull, while the former fell with such force on the sharp rocks that the life was literally knocked out of her body.

Fleetfoot was still found breathing, but his body was such a shapeless mass of bruised flesh and broken bones that he died before they could remove him to his own lodge.

To the rocks upon which the fatal leaps were made was given the name of "Lovers' Leap," a name which it still retains, although a thriving young city has now grown up only a short distance from the spot, while a great railway system carries hundreds of people daily along the brink of the precipice from which those three each made their fatal leap.

The three boulders that marked their graves have correctly been termed the "Maiden and Her Lovers" by the many curious visitors who have since visited the spot, and wondered how they came there at that distance from all surrounding rocks.

C. Edwin Welles.


PART EIGHT OF PEARSON'S SHAKESPEARE
Is on sale on Thursday, March 25th, and it will be profusely illustrated.
Copies cannot be found on bookstalls or in shop windows. They can be obtained *only* by ordering through a newsagent for 6d. each, or direct from this office for 7½d. post free.

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The Outlaw's Daughter.

'Cencion Lopez, daughter of Cenaga, the outlaw, paused on the brink of the stream, casting a quick glance down its scarred bed; then she threw back her head and scanned the hill above her. She laughed out merrily at the dancing flutter of scarlet, as a gay breeze caught the curtain in her cabin window, and, steadying her deftly-poised olla with one brown hand, darted, lithe and swift as a young panther, across the plank and up the well-trod trail.

She placed her burden on the table, and, setting plates and cups for two, turned hastily to the stove again to spread tortillas on the hissing lids.

Just as the last cake found its place, a fugitive step rattled the pebbles before the door.

The flush on the girl's face deepened, and her full eyes widened expectantly; she sprang to meet the newcomer's warm caress, took his rifle and sombrero from him, and hurried to serve the meal, while he unwound the folds of his dun *serape*.

"I saw thy signal, *querida*," he said, in musical bass, flinging down the wrap and moving to the cradle side. "How fares my son? Is all well with ye since I last came?"

The baby slept; 'Cencion laid her eager face on the man's shoulder, smiling down at the wee, dark profile.

"All is well," she answered.

"And Juan?"

"Comes not till Monday; you have four days of safety, *mi muy caro*." A little frown drew between her brows, but her lips still smiled. "Come, señor, the supper cools."

* * * * *

Smarting under his ill-fortune and fiercely angry at his false comrade, Juan Lopez gathered together the wreckage from his outfit and set his face towards home. It had been a disastrous trip from the very start; he might have known, when Atar refused to budge from the corral and only passed the gate protestingly under the quirt, that the expedition was destined to failure.

"*Madre de Dios*," he muttered stormily, "much good may his burros do him! May they stumble in the stream and drown; may they stampede and lose him in the desert! As for me, my load floats down the cañon, and I go home. Again I shall know not to travel with one under an evil star!"

All day Atar and Selin plodded with drooping heads under the glaring sun! The chalky powder rose like smoke under their steady hoof-falls; the fever of his hurt grew in his blood, and resentment consumed him.

Superstitious foreboding haunted his tortured senses as he brooded over his loss and desertion. Misfortune had followed him from the cabin. Had he cast off the incubus with his ill-starred friendship, or was some fell spirit still tracing his movements? Insensibly, as the return road shortened, and no further evil marred his journeying, the evanescent dread took the shape of a nameless fear for 'Cencion and the child.

His head throbbed, the breath of evening floating down the cañon could not ease his sick discomfort; the weary pace nettled him! When at last the frowning walls around him lowered, and, turning from the main trail, the heavy cart lumbered over the baked earth along his own stream, Juan urged his horses into a trot, in spite of the pain in his left arm, and, with a final malediction on the recreant Manuel, rattled quickly over the last bare hillock, and sprang down by the corral gate. In a few minutes he was following his wife's footsteps up the steep ascent to the cabin door.

It struck him with a creepy chill that no 'Cencion stood on the threshold, calling down her welcome; then he laughed aloud at his foolish fear. His eyes twinkled in a momentary revulsion of feeling. How fine a surprise would he be to his *prima querida*! He stole upward silently. The fever flush caught him with his hand on the latch, the sound of a voice fell upon his ear—a musical, mellow tone—then madness surged into his brain.

This, then, was the meaning of his disasters, this the crowning trick of his evil genius! His pulse scorched.

He had never doubted her, never for one instant dreamed that her isolation was not complete on his long monthly trips to Vallecita—he had forgotten, fool that he was, that strain of lawless blood—secure in his infatuation, but now—now—he did not feel the wrenching of his hurt as he swung the rifle into position and moved noiseless, cat-like, under the opened window.

Crouching under the casement like a puma, lips snarled apart over glistening, cruel teeth, Juan Lopez waited; his eyes blurred, he brushed an impatient hand to clear them, listening.

The baby's gurgling laughter quivered through him. 'Cencion's light step sounded on the earthen floor, and she seemed to start up before him in all her palpitating womanhood. He choked a groan.

Then the voice! "Bring here the boy, *carina*."

Juan struggled with the sound's vague familiarity. "Carina," he groaned, and ground his teeth impotently. Soft swishings and rustlings and 'Cencion's quick, gay treble: "Here, then. Take your boy. He grows more like you daily, *caro mio*." Through this deadly pain, the bowed listener felt one keener pang for his son—his beloved. He must see! Could the fellow be José or Stefan? Did the boy look like Stefan?—that elusive familiarity of tone——

Dragging himself up cautiously, he peered into the dim room, trusting to the swift-drawing night's protection. 'Cencion—his heart yearned to her, even in her falsity—stood by the couch, bending over the dark form of the intruder with the child in her arms; her dusky hair fell round her like a veil, intercepting the coveted view of his rival.

This was his time; one bullet now and vengeance!

Juan reeled faintly, and then grew rigid. With deliberate, silent care, he placed his weapon, and drew his bead; just here the woman's sash-line, and here, beyond, the head of her paramour—but the child?

The homely house furnishings seem to leap out of the darkness; the stove, the littered table, and the couch, the iron crucifix, and the carved cradle in the corner—all his life long Juan will see them so—and 'Cencion turned; the dusky veil was blown and rent like the sea-mist, revealing—Holy Mother of Heaven! her father, Cenaga, the outlaw!

Juan Lopez fell on his knees below the window, the smoking rifle clattered from his broken grasp, and the missile sped, aimless and harmless, high into the adobe wall.

Gertrude B. Millard.

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IV.—The Night Attack on Badajos.

Hand to hand, and foot to foot:
Nothing there, save death, was mute:
Stroke, and thrust, and flash, and cry
For quarter or for victory,
Mingle there with the volleying thunder,
Which makes the distant cities wonder
How the sounding battle goes,
If with them or for their foes;
If they must mourn or must rejoice
In that annihilating voice,
Which pierces the deep hills through and through
With an echo dread and new.

* * * * *

From the point of encountering blades to the hilt,
Sabres and swords with blood were gilt;
But the rampart is won and the spoil begun,
And all but the after carnage done.

Byron.

It would be difficult to find in the whole history of wars a more thrilling and heroic chapter than that which tells the story of the six great campaigns of the Peninsular War.

This was, perhaps, the least selfish war of which history tells. It was not a war of aggrandisement or of conquest; it was waged to deliver not merely Spain, but the whole of Europe from that military despotism with which the genius and ambition of Napoleon threatened to overwhelm the civilised world. And on what a scale Great Britain, when aroused, can fight, let the Peninsular War tell.

At its close the fleets of Great Britain rode triumphant on every sea; and in the Peninsular between 1808-14 her land forces fought and won nineteen pitched battles, made or sustained ten fierce sieges, took four great fortresses, twice expelled the French from Portugal and once from Spain. Great Britain expended in these campaigns more than £100,000,000 sterling on her own troops, besides subsidising the forces of Spain and Portugal.

This "nation of shopkeepers" proved that, when kindled to action, it could wage war on a scale and in a fashion that might have moved the wonder of Alexander or of Cæsar, and from motives, it may be added, too lofty for either Cæsar or Alexander so much as to comprehend. It is worth while to tell afresh the story of some of the more picturesque incidents of that great strife.

On April 6th, 1812, Badajos was stormed by Wellington; and the story forms one of the most tragical and splendid incidents in the military history of the world. Of "the night of the horrors of Badajos," Napier says, "posterity can scarcely be expected to credit the tale." No tale, however, is better authenticated, or, as an example of what disciplined human valour is capable of achieving, better deserves to be told.

Wellington was preparing for his great forward movement into Spain, the campaign which led to Vittoria, the battle in which "40,000 Frenchmen were beaten in forty minutes." As a preliminary he had to capture, under the vigilant eyes of Soult and Marmont, the two great border fortresses—Cuidad Rodrigo and Badajos. He had, to use Napier's phrase, "jumped with both feet" on the first named fortress, and captured it in twelve days with a loss of 1,200 men and 90 officers.

But Badajos was a still harder task. The city stands on a rocky ridge, which forms the last spur of the Toledo range, and is of extraordinary strength. The river Rivillas falls almost at right angles into the Guadiana, and in the angle formed by their junction stands Badajos, oval in shape, girdled with elaborate defences, with the Guadiana, 500 yards wide, as its defence to the north, the Rivillas serving as a wet ditch to the west, and no fewer than five great fortified outposts—Saint Roque, Christoval, Picurina, Pardaleras, and a fortified bridge-head across the Guadiana—as the outer zone of its defences.

Twice the English had already assailed Badajos, but assailed it in vain. It was now held by a garrison 5,000 strong, under a soldier, General Phillipson, with a real genius for defence, and the utmost art had been employed in adding to its defences.

On the other hand Wellington had no means of transport, and no battery train, and had to make all his preparations under the keen-eyed vigilance of the French. Perhaps the strangest collection of artillery ever employed in a great siege was that which Wellington secured from every available quarter, and used at Badajos. Of the fifty-two pieces, some dated from the days of Phillip II. and the Spanish Armada, some were cast in the reign of Phillip III., others in that of John IV. of Portugal, who reigned in 1640; there were 24-pounders of George II.'s day, and Russian naval guns, the bulk of the extraordinary medley being obsolete brass engines which required from seven to ten minutes to cool between each discharge.

Wellington, however, was strong in his own warlike genius and in the quality of the troops he commanded. He employed 18,000 men in the siege, and it may well be doubted whether—if we put the question of equipment aside—a more perfect fighting instrument than the force under his orders ever existed. The men were veterans, but the officers on the whole were young, so there was steadiness in the ranks and fire in the leading.

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Hill and Graham covered the siege, Picton and Barnard, Kempt and Colville led the assaults. The trenches were held by the third, fourth, and fifth divisions, and by the famous light division. It has been said that the Macedonian phalanx of Alexander the Great, the Tenth legion of Cæsar, the famous Spanish infantry of Alva, or the iron soldiers who followed Cortes to Mexico, did not exceed the latter in warlike quality.

Wellington's troops, too, had a personal grudge against Badajos, and had two defeats to avenge.

Perhaps no siege in history, as a matter of fact, ever witnessed either more furious valour in the assault, or more of cool and skilled courage in the defence. The siege lasted exactly twenty days, and cost the besiegers 5,000 men, or an average loss of 250 per day. It was waged throughout in stormy weather, with the rivers steadily rising, and the tempests perpetually blowing. Yet the thunder of the attack never paused for an instant.

Wellington's engineers attacked the city at the eastern end of the oval, where the Rivillas served it as a gigantic wet ditch; and the Picurina, a fortified hill fringed by a ditch fourteen feet deep, a rampart sixteen feet high, and a zone of mines, acted as an outwork.

Wellington, curiously enough, believed in night attacks, a sure proof of his faith in the quality of the men he commanded; and on the eighth night of the siege, at nine o'clock, 500 men of the third division were suddenly flung on the Picurina.

The fort broke into a ring of flame, by the light of which the dark figures of the stormers were seen leaping with fierce hardihood into the ditch and struggling madly up the ramparts, or tearing furiously at the pallisades. But the defences were strong, and the assailants fell literally in scores. Napier tells how "the axemen of the light division, compassing the fort like prowling wolves," discovered the gate at the rear, and so broke into the fort.

The engineer officer who led the attack declares that the place would never have been taken had it not been for the coolness of these men in absolutely walking round the fort to its rear, discovering the gate, and hewing it down under a storm of bullets.

The assault lasted an hour, and, in that period, out of the 500 men who attacked, no fewer than 300, with nineteen officers, were killed or wounded. Three men out of every five in the attacking force, that is, were disabled—and yet they won!

There followed twelve days of furious industry, of trenches pushed tirelessly forward though mud and wet, and of cannonading that only ceased when the guns grew too hot to be used.

Captain MacCarthy of the 50th Regiment has left a curious little monograph on the siege, full of incidents, half tragic and half amusing, but which show the temper of Wellington's troops.

Thus he tells how an engineer, when marking out the ground for a breaching-battery very near the wall, which was always lined with French soldiers in eager search of human targets, "used to challenge them to prove the perfection of their shooting by lifting up the skirts of his coat in defiance several times in the course of his survey; driving in his stakes and measuring his distances with great deliberation, and concluding by an extra shake of his coat-tails and an ironical bow, before he stepped under shelter!"

On the night of April 6th, Wellington determined to assault. No fewer than seven attacks were to be delivered. Two of them—on the bridge-head across the Guadiana; and on the Pardaleras—were mere feints. But on the extreme right Picton, with the third division, was to cross the Rivillas and escalade the castle, whose walls rose, time-stained and grim, from eighteen to twenty-four feet high.

Leigh, with the fifth division, was to attack the opposite, or western extremity of the town, the bastion of Saint Vincente, where the glacis was mined, the ditch deep, and the scarp thirty feet high. Against the actual breaches Colville and Andrew Barnard were to lead the light division and the fourth division, the former attacking the bastion of Santa Maria, and the latter the Trinidad.

The hour was fixed for ten o'clock, and the story of that night attack, as told in Napier's immortal prose, is one of the great battle-pictures of literature; and anyone who tries to tell the tale will find himself slipping insensibly into Napier's cadences.

The night was black, a strange silence lay on rampart and trench, broken from time to time by the deep voices of the sentinels, that proclaimed all was well in Badajos. "*Sentinelle garde à vous*," the cry of the sentinels, was translated by a British private as "All's well in Badahoo!"

A lighted carcass thrown from the castle discovered Picton's men standing in ordered array, and compelled them to attack at once. MacCarthy, who acted as guide across the tangle of wet trenches and the narrow bridge that spanned the Rivillas, has left an amusing account of the scene.

At one time Picton declared MacCarthy was leading them wrong, and drawing his sword, swore he would cut him down! The column reached the trench, however, at the foot of the castle walls, and was instantly overwhelmed with the fire of the besieged. MacCarthy says we can only picture the scene by "supposing that all the stars, planets, and meteors of the firmament, with innumerable moons emitting smaller ones in their course, were descending on the heads of the besiegers!"

MacCarthy himself, a typical and gallant Irishman, addressed his general with the exultant remark: "'Tis a glorious night, sir, a glorious night!" and rushing forward to the head of the stormers shouted: "Up with the ladders!"

The five ladders were raised, the troops swarmed up, an officer leading, but the first files were at once crushed by cannon fire and the ladders slipped into the angle of the abutments.

"Dreadful their fall," records MacCarthy of the slaughtered stormers, "and appalling their appearance at daylight." One ladder remained, and, a private soldier leading, the eager, red-coated crowd swarmed up it.

The brave fellow leading was shot as soon as his head appeared above the parapet, but the next man to him—again a private—leaped over the parapet, and was followed quickly by others, and this thin stream of desperate men climbed singly and, in the teeth of the flashing musketry, up that solitary ladder, carried the castle.

In the meanwhile, the fourth and light divisions had flung themselves with cool and silent speed on the breaches. The storming party of each division leaped into the ditch. It was mined, the fuse was kindled, and the ditch, crowded with eager soldiery, became in a moment a sort of flaming crater, and the storming parties, 500 strong, were in one fierce explosion dashed to pieces.

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The Night Attack on Badajos.

The stubborn soldiers, however, discovered a low spot in the rampart, placed three ladders against it, and climbed with reckless valour. The first man was pushed up by his comrades; he in turn dragged others up, and the unconquerable British at length broke through and swept the bastion.

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In the light of that dreadful flame the whole scene became visible—the black ramparts, crowded with dark figures and glittering arms, on the one side; on the other the red columns of the British, broad and deep, moving steadily forward like a stream of human lava. The light division stood at the brink of the smoking ditch for an instant, amazed at the sight.

"Then," says Napier, "with a shout that matched even the sound of the explosion, they leaped into it and swarmed up to the breach." The fourth division came running up and descended with equal fury, but the ditch opposite the Trinidad was filled with water; the head of the division leaped into it, and, as Napier puts it, "above 100 of the Fusiliers, the men of Albuera, perished there."

The breaches were impassable.

Across the top of the great slope of broken wall glittered a fringe of sword-blades, sharp-pointed, keen-edged on both sides, fixed in ponderous beams chained together and set deep in the ruins. For ten feet in front the ascent was covered with loose planks, studded with sharp iron points. Behind the glittering hedge of sword-blades stood the solid ranks of the French, each man supplied with three muskets, and their fire scourged the British ranks like a tempest.

Hundreds had fallen, hundreds were still falling; but the British clung doggedly to the lower slopes, and every few minutes an officer would leap forward with a shout, a swarm of men would instantly follow him, and like leaves blown by a whirlwind they swept up the ascent.

But, under the incessant fire of the French, the assailants melted away. One private reached the sword-blades, and actually thrust his head beneath them, till his brains were beaten out, so desperate was his resolve to get into Badajos.

The breach, as Napier describes it, "yawning and glittering with steel, resembled the mouth of a huge dragon, belching forth smoke and flame."

But for two hours, and until 3,000 men had fallen, the stubborn British persisted in their attack. Currie, of the 52nd, a cool and most daring soldier, found a narrow ramp beyond the Santa Maria breach only half ruined; he forced his way back through the tumult and carnage to where Wellington stood watching the scene, obtained an unbroken battalion from the reserve, and led it towards the broken ramp. But his men were caught in the whirling madness of the ditch and swallowed up in the tumult.

Nicholas, of the Engineers, and Shaw, of the 43rd, with some fifty soldiers actually climbed into the Santa Maria bastion, and from thence tried to force their way into the breach. Every man was shot down, except Shaw, who stood alone on the bastion.

With inexpressible coolness he looked at his watch, said it was too late to carry the breaches, and then leaped down.

The British could not penetrate the breach; but they would not retreat. They could only die where they stood. The buglers of the reserve were sent to the crest of the glacis to sound the retreat; the troops in the ditch would not believe the signal to be genuine, and struck their own buglers who attempted to repeat it.

"Gathering in dark groups, and leaning on their muskets," says Napier, "they looked up in sullen desperation at Trinidad, while the enemy, stepping out on the ramparts, and aiming their shots by the light of fire-balls, which they threw over, asked as their victims fell: 'Why did they not come into Badajos?'"

All this while, curiously enough, Picton was actually in Badajos, and held the castle securely, but made no attempt to clear the breach. On the extreme west of the town, however, at the bastion of San Vincente, the fifth division made an attack as desperate as that which was falling at the breaches. When the stormers actually reached the bastion the Portuguese battalions, who formed part of the attack, dismayed by the tremendous fire which broke out on then, flung down their ladders and fled.

The British, however, snatched the ladders up, forced the barrier, jumped into the ditch, and tried to climb the walls, these were 30ft. high, and the ladders were too short. A mine was sprung in the ditch under the soldiers' feet; beams of wood, stones, broken waggons, and live shells were poured upon their heads from above. Showers of grape from the flank swept the ditch.

The stubborn soldiers, however, discovered a low spot in the rampart, placed three ladders against it, and climbed with reckless valour. The first man was pushed up by his comrades; he in turn dragged others up, and the unconquerable British at length broke through and swept the bastion.

The tumult still stormed and raged at the eastern breaches where the men of the light and fourth division were dying sullenly, and the men of the fourth division marched at speed across the town to take the great eastern breach in the rear.

The streets were empty, but the silent houses were bright with lamps. The men of the fourth pressed on; they captured mules carrying ammunition to the breaches, and the French, startled by the tramp of the fast approaching column, and finding themselves taken in the rear, fled. The light and fourth division broke through the gap hitherto barred by flame and steel, and Badajos was won!

In that dreadful night assault the English lost 3,500 men. "Let it be considered," says Napier, "that this frightful carnage took place in the space of less than a hundred yards square—that the slain died not all suddenly, nor by one manner of death—that some perished by steel, some by shot, some by water; that some were crushed and mangled by heavy weights, some trampled upon, some dashed to atoms by the fiery explosions—that for hours this destruction was endured without shrinking, and the town was won at last."

Let these things be considered, and it must be admitted a British army bears with it an awful power.

And false would it be to say the French were feeble men. The garrison stood and fought manfully and with good discipline, behaving worthily; shame there was none on any side.

Yet who shall do justice to the bravery of the British soldiers or the noble emulation of the officers?

No age, no nation, ever sent forth braver troops to battle than those who stormed Badajos.

("*The fire-ships in the Basque Roads*" *next week.*)

JUMBLED PICTURE COMPETITION.

No. 3.

Cut out the figures portrayed in the sketches contained in this number, and paste them up to form one picture. £2 2s. will go to the reader whose attempt is considered cleverest, and a copy of "Valdar the Oft-born" to each of the five next. Date of closing: Monday, March 29th, 1897.

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The Mystery of the Mines.

Far in the Lamb's Flat mining region, where the town of Warra now stands, was a hill, beneath whose crust of earth a vast treasure of ore lay buried, that was being mined by a community that numbered about sixty men, under the supervision of two overseers and an experienced and practical chemist and engineer.

It was on a dark night in July, when it happened that one of the overseers and a miner, having been engaged for some time in repairing a drill, seated themselves near a wall of rock in the quarry. The two men were on intimate terms of friendship. The overseer, Charles Bancroft, by name, said to his friend, George Reynolds:

"George, let's stay out here a while. It's terribly hot in the shanty, and I don't want to turn in yet. There isn't a breath of air stirring, but I think there'll be a storm pretty soon. Light your pipe."

"'Tis cooler out here," said Reynolds, as both men lighted their pipes and settled themselves against the wall of a rock, "and, besides, I have something curious to tell you. Why, what's that? Look, Charlie!"

He started to his feet and pointed into the darkness at the opening of the quarry. Bancroft sprang up and strained his eyes in the direction indicated.

"I don't see anything," he said.

"I saw a woman, or a girl, run like a deer under the trees yonder, and am going to see what it means."

He sprang into the darkness, leaving Bancroft seated on the rock smoking and laughing at him.

Five minutes passed, and Reynolds returned.

"I couldn't find anything; but there is a mystery about this quarry that I shall solve some time," said Reynolds seriously. "Do you remember, about three weeks ago, when I came to camp and sounded the alarm, and we all turned out, near midnight, and heard the sound of galloping horses rushing through the forest?"

"Yes, that was a genuine fright. But what has that to do with to-night's ghost?"

"Nothing, perhaps, but I will tell you what led to the discovery of that band of riders. That night, before I gave the alarm, I was sitting, just as I am now, smoking my pipe. I was amusing myself by picking up small pieces of ore and throwing them against the opposite wall. I reached over and picked from the ground a little piece, and then began beating the sharp points on the rock just here behind me. I struck the rock perhaps a dozen times, when I heard against the rock a noise as of someone hammering it from the other side, and as if proceeding from within the rock a loud, though muffled, 'Hello! Hello!'

"Could I be dreaming? I remained quiet for half a minute, when the pounding was repeated and the voice came again: 'Hello! hello! Don't you hear me?' I can hardly describe my feelings. The voice was that of a woman, and I thought of all the stories I had heard of haunted woods, and spirit-caves and ghosts and fairies, as I answered in a loud tone:

"'Yes, I hear. Where and who are you?'

"Clear and distinct came the answer:

"'I have come to warn you. The Night Riders are out, and will attack and rob your camp unless it is aroused. Go and give the alarm at once.'

"'Who are the Night Riders?' I asked.

"'A band of robbers and cut-throats, whose hiding-place is in these hills. Come here every night, and I will warn you of intended raids.'

"I asked another question but received no reply, neither could I recall my mysterious visitor by hammering on the rock. I yet had a notion that someone was playing me a trick, and that if I should arouse the camp I should be heartily laughed at. So I waited to see what would happen. I had not long to wait, for when I slowly walked through the woods just outside there, the moon being full up, I saw down in the defile a band of twenty horsemen riding cautiously towards me. You know the rest. How the camp was aroused and armed, and how, when the riders came within shooting distance, they suddenly turned back over their own trail, and when we followed they had disappeared."

"Yes, their seeing the camp aroused, and knowing our strength, probably were afraid to venture at attack. But why did you not tell me of this before?"

"Because I wanted to verify the occurrence, and I have come to this spot every night. Nothing has happened since then. Now, I don't believe in ghosts, but if my mysterious visitant is one, I believe in her, and I shall make mighty endeavours to—There! Do you not hear it?"

While George Reynolds was talking, a mysterious knocking was heard at the rock behind them. Both men sprang to their feet. Reynolds picked up a heavy piece of ore and struck half-a-dozen blows against the wall.

Instantly came a woman's voice, seemingly from within the rock:

"Hello! hello!"

"You see, it is as I told you," said Reynolds.

"Yes, I see. Answer the voice."

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Both men pressed their ears to the wall, and Reynolds called:

"Hello! I hear you."

"The captain has learned that the miners were paid off to-day, and there will be another raid as soon as the storm breaks. Go back to your camp immediately."

"But tell me what and where you are."

"That is of no consequence. Enough that I know your camp well, and if you will come here every night I will always give you warning in time to prepare for an attack. I am going now."

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Reynolds.

"That's no ghost! or, if it is, it's a very sensible sort of spirit, and evidently bent on doing the right thing by us. Guess we'd better follow its suggestions and alarm the camp. We'll get all the men into Redfield's shanty, and leave the others just as they are, making it appear that the men have all turned in; then, when the horses are within gunshot, we'll send in a volley and begin business. The wonder to me is how they find out about pay-day. They must have spies posted, or we have a traitor in camp. If the latter is true, and we find him out, we'll make short work of him, I warrant. Are you armed?"

"Yes; I always carry my revolvers at night."

"Then let us start."

The two friends started cautiously through the opening of the quarry. A vivid flash of lightning leaped athwart the sky, and a heavy volley of thunder echoed through the hills. Then followed flash on flash. The storm would soon be on them, sending down a torrent of rain. The darkness was intense, save when the lightning flashed. The two men followed a road cut through the forest for the use of the men and working horses and mules to and fro from the iron mine.

The distance from the mine to the shanty village was about three-quarters of a mile. The little cluster of houses stood in a piece of cleared ground, nearly circular in form, containing, perhaps, forty acres. The shop and log-house of James Redfield, the chemist, engineer and superintendent of the mine, stood in the centre. The house was strongly built, and was intended as a place of protection and defence of the little community. The men reached the camp in a violent storm.

The miners, already awakened from their sleep after the day's work by the terrible storm, needed no rousing. There were even lights in several cabins as the two men entered the clearing. The alarm signal that all understood was the easily-imitated cry of the mocking-bird. As our friends entered the circle of shanties they stopped, and in a loud voice sounded the signal.

Lights were quickly extinguished as the call went through the camp, and through the dark night and heavy rain, men, armed to the teeth, went hurrying to the log-house. All within the little fortress was darkness. James Redfield, who had been working at his books when the alarm was sounded, had closed the heavy wooden shutters to the four windows, and opened the slides of the loop-holes. In ten minutes from the first alarm all the miners, with their valuables on their persons and their weapons ready for action, were in the log-house, the men ranged round the walls, peering through the loop-holes.

The lightning flashed almost incessantly, revealing all outside clearly to the gaze of the watchers. Suddenly an exclamation broke simultaneously from the lips of the men stationed at the front wall of the building:

"There they are!"

James Redfield rushed to a loop-hole. A vivid and prolonged flash of lightning revealed to his gaze fully thirty horsemen scattered about the clearing among the shanties.

Another vivid flash of lightning showed the band of horsemen riding slowly and cautiously towards the log-house.

"Did you see them, boys, and could you see to shoot at another flash?"

"Yes!" came from twenty voices.

"Then do it."

A prolonged flash of lightning, and before the thunder was heard, twenty rifles had sent their deadly missiles into the approaching band of horsemen. A wild shout of dismay went up from the Night Riders.

"Once more, boys!" shouted Redfield. "Shoot just as you did before. Don't wait for the flash. Shoot anywhere."

At that moment a volley from the riders rattled harmlessly against the log wall of the house.

"Now!" cried Redfield, as he threw open the door of the log-house. "Their rifles are empty. Quick! with your revolvers at 'em. Every man follow me, and shoot where you saw their guns flash. Shoot anywhere in that direction. We'll dress them out in a few minutes. After me, boys!"

He sprang through the doorway into the rain and darkness, firing his heavy pistols as he went. Sixty men followed him, spreading themselves in a semi-circle and shooting in the direction of the robber horde. Each man was armed with two heavy revolvers, and as a flash of lightning revealed the confused band of Night Riders, the miners opened a fusilade that scattered them in all directions.

"Follow them up," cried Redfield, as he dashed with his blazing pistols into the gloom. With a wild shout the men followed him, keeping up their terrible fusilade. The rout was complete and the miners were victorious.

The storm was subsiding and the lightning had passed far to the west. Only faint gleams now and then lighted up the scene for an instant. But the darkness was intense, and it would have been folly for the miners to attempt following the riders on foot.

A body of the miners remained on the field, while the rest ran for torches. In a few minutes the clearing was ablaze with a light from fifty pine knot torches, and the ground was thoroughly searched. Eight lifeless bodies were found, and, strangely enough, only one wounded man. He was nearly dead, but as the light was flashed into his face he made a feeble effort to conceal his features with his hands. A cry of astonishment broke from the men as they recognised the face of a miner.

"Tom Murphy!"

"Yes," said the wounded man with a sickly attempt at a laugh, "Tom Murphy."

"But how do you come out here wounded among the dead robbers?" asked Redfield.

"I will tell you," said Charles Bancroft, stepping forward. "I made up my mind to-night that we had a traitor in camp who was giving information to the band of Night Riders. You all remember that last pay-day they appeared, and here they are again at pay-day. In order to avoid the possibility of loss by robbery, I requested the firm in Sydney to forward the funds so that they will reach here only on pay-day morning. These Night Riders, as they call themselves, are fools to suppose they could go through the camp and rob the men separately; and I think their course of action was

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advised by the arch-fool, Tom Murphy, who lies before us. He is the traitor."

"Murphy, is this true?" asked Redfield.

"Well," said the dying man, weakly, "they say that silence gives consent, so if I keep still you'll believe it of me. I'm a-dyin', an' I don't want to die with a lie on my lips. I'll say that it is true. I want to die alone."

The bodies of the robbers were carried into a tool shanty, where they were left until the morning, when they were buried in one grave half-a-mile away in the thickest part of the bush. Pickets were stationed about the camp, and the miners again returned to their shanties, but few eyes were closed in slumber that night.

The morning dawned brightly clear, and the men, after burying the dead, among which was the body of the traitor, Tom Murphy, went to the mine.

George Reynolds, having received leave of absence from the quarry, began his investigations, but the night fell, and he had learned nothing. When the darkness settled down, he, with Charles Bancroft and James Redfield, came to the spot from which the warning voice had been heard. The superintendent had been made acquainted with the facts.

"Now, boys," he said, "the mystery is simply this: There is a cavern in this hill, and we have quarried near to it. This morning, after I had heard your story, I examined the wall behind us, and I found a small rift in the rock. Reach up with me, and I will show you. It is wide enough to put your finger in."

The three men stood up, and Redfield guided their hands to a narrow crack in the rocky wall.

"That crack goes into a cave, and the person who gave the warning spoke through it. Ah, what is that?"

A violent knocking was heard on the rock behind them, followed by a muffled "Hello! hello!"

"Hello!" cried Redfield. "Where are you?"

"In the cave," cried a woman's voice. They have left me here to die."

"Who have?"

"The Night Riders. I was in the woods last night, just before the storm, and when the band returned after their defeat, they accused me of having warned the camp, and kept me in the cave at the point of their pistols, while a few of them gathered up all that was valuable, and carried it outside, leaving me not a morsel of food, nor a weapon. Then they closed the opening with a pile of rock that I cannot break down, and left me here to die as a punishment for betraying their plans."

"Where is the opening to the cave?"

"On the other side of the hill—more than a mile from here. There is a deep defile, almost impassable, and the filled-up opening is in the hill."

"Well, we don't go round there. They may be lying in ambush for us, and have used you as a means of sending us to our death. If you want to get out we'll blast the rock here and release you. Can this be blasted without hurting you?"

"I can go to the far end of the cavern, behind a point of rock, and your blast cannot harm me."

"Reynolds, go and get ten men and a couple of drills and powder and torches. We'll blast the rock."

The men whom Reynolds brought went to work with a will by the light of a big wood fire, and in less than three hours the prisoner was freed. She was a young, handsome woman; she clambered over the sharp, rough rock through the newly-made opening. Then she stood in a half-shy manner for a moment, and essayed to speak, but could only utter:

"You are good to me, and I thank you for the pains you have taken. I—I——"

"Now, boys," said Redfield, "our unknown friend, who has saved us from a certain danger and loss needs food and rest after the ordeal through which she has so bravely passed. So then we will start for camp at once."

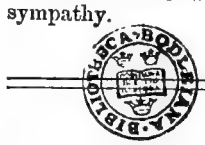
Handsome, indeed she was, under the glare of the torches, and as James Redfield brought up a horse, she sprang into the saddle with the grace of a trained horsewoman. All returned to camp. She told her story in Redfield's shanty.

From her narrative it appeared that this was the remnant of a once powerful band of bushrangers, that had operated with much success in a region further south. The band had rescued her when she was twelve years old from a marauding party of aborigines that had destroyed her home and murdered all belonging to her. So she had been in the band for six years, loved by all as a good and true friend.

The band to a man would lay down their lives in her defence, and it had been understood that none should seek to win her regard other than the mere feeling of friendship that she gave to all. The men were on the point of disbanding, and would have done so, had it not been for the influence of Tom Murphy, who had been with them before.

She had warned the camp, because she was tired of the lawless life with which she had never been in sympathy.

Rudolph Minns.



RESULT OF

"PICTURE STORY" COMPETITION

No. 5.

The attempts in this competition were distinctly brilliant, and we regret that space will not permit the publication of those sent in by all the prize-winners.

The £2 prize has gone to Mr. Duncan Shepperd, 13, St. George's Square, Forest Gate, E.

The five bottles of *Home Notes Bouquet* have been sent to the following persons, whose efforts were considered the next best: James Matthews, "The Elms," Newbury, Berks; Mr. W. E. Bradley, 67, Cambridge Street, Todmorden, Yorks; Mr. D. B. Browning, c.o. Browning, Wood Merchant, Paisley; Mr. J. F. Gray, 35, Glenparke Road, Upton Lane, Forest Gate; and Mr. T. W. Rose, Norfolk Road, Rickmansworth.

Winning Attempt.

1.—Nice old lady,
Been to town,

2.—Bought two sausages,
Fried them brown.

3.—"One for the cat,
And one for me,
Puss! Puss! Puss!
Where can he be?"

4.—She took the candle,
Looked under the bed,

5.—Into the cupboard
She popped her head,

6.—Out on the roof
She called its name,

7.—Down in the cellar
She did the same.

8.—At length in despair
The search she gave up,
And returned to her room
Alone, to sup.

9.—But judge the surprise
The old lady got,
When she found the cat
Had eaten the lot.

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So many of my readers are already familiar with the objects and manner of working of the Fresh Air Fund, that it is only necessary here to mention the fact that the subscription list is now open, for them to at once send in their contributions.

There are, however, on the other hand, an enormous number of present subscribers to *S.S.* who last year took no interest in the paper or the F.A.F. It is for their benefit that I give a short *résumé* of the work in connection with the F.A.F. which has been carried out during the last five years.

In 1892 the first list opened in *Pearson's Weekly*, and at the end of the summer 20,500 of the very poorest and most destitute children of the slums of our great cities were given the opportunity of taking a day's journey into the country and of enjoying a sufficiency of wholesome and substantial food.

In the second year 40,230 children were dealt with, while the liberal support afforded by readers to the movement enabled me to extend the work to the provinces, with the result that in 1894 the number of children sprang up to over 74,000.

In 1895 a small army of 96,000 children had cause to bless the generosity of our readers, while last year were added the heartfelt thanks of another 5,000, making the total of 101,000.

The amount collected in 1896 was £4,100, every penny of which was expended on the little ones themselves, *S.S.*, *P.W.* and the Ragged School Union sharing between them all the expenses connected with the management and organisation of the Fresh Air Fund.

Poverty is the only qualification necessary to make a child eligible to enjoy one of these outings. The selections are made irrespective of creed or denomination, and the little Protestant joins hands with the baby Roman Catholic in a merry-go-round or a scramble for sweetmeats.

I should like to take you personally through some of the slums that exist in London, and to show you just exactly the style of heart-breaking poverty and suffering you are asked to alleviate. As this is impossible, I can only ask you, through these columns, to at least contribute nine pennies to the Fund. These nine pennies will cover the entire expenses of a day's outing for one child, and will give this one child a taste of the sweets of life which will hover in its memory for weeks and weeks.

So you see that the greatest amount of enjoyment possible is got out of this modest sum, a fact which makes the Fresh Air Fund the most practical of charities. Let it be understood that the smallest contribution will be accepted with the same gratitude as a big one. It is not everybody who can give away a ten-pound note in charity, but everybody in ordinary circumstances can afford a shilling.

Moreover, those whose hearts are thoroughly in accord with this scheme are given an opportunity of showing their practical appreciation by collecting sums on forms to be obtained from this office.

As to what an enormous aggregation of people like the readers of *P.W.* may do if they worked together may be judged from the fact that if each of those who every week see a copy of the paper is worth on an average £100, the total capital of this colossal body would be £500,000,000.

All that we ask is but a little over 1-100,000th part of this stupendous amount. While, if each person sent one penny stamp, the amount required would be subscribed more than four times over, and make it possible to bring happiness into the lives of no fewer than 500,000 children, and it would be no difficult task to find them either.

As regards the programme, however, as at present arranged, every town in the United Kingdom with a population of over 200,000 inhabitants will have its own committee for the purpose of arranging these outings, particulars of which will be found in *P.W.* There are altogether twenty-two of these cities, and I do not for one moment doubt that those readers residing in every other part of the country will respond as heartily to this appeal as those who are enabled to see with their own eyes the excellent work carried out as a result of their thoughtful generosity.

As it has been necessary to guarantee £2,025 before entering into arrangements with those who have been kind enough to offer their services of superintending in the provinces, I hope that my readers will get to work at once and do as they have done in the past.

I am going to worry you with articles and notices and subscription lists and things of that sort all through the summer; but I have no fear of appearing aggressive to the right-minded individual. It is only the person who does not fork out his mite that looks upon the F.A.F. as a bore.

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CHAPTER XIV.

Cécile Knits her Brows.

Edith was gone!

The day after, Cécile, summoned by telegram by Lady Hilton, arrived from Shropshire. With a very pale face she read the note left for her by Edith. She laid it down with lips pressed tightly together.

"It is all right," she said, and threw herself into an arm-chair, sitting with far-away, dreaming eyes.

Jack Heathcote was standing in his stables.

Soon she sprang up, all vigour, and wit, and action. She took a pencil and some telegraph forms, and filled up two of the forms. The first was as follows:

To Jack Heathcote,
Westmore Manor, near Seaboro'.
"I am in trouble.
Cécile Délisle."

The second telegram read:

To Inspector Wheeler,
Scotland Yard, Whitehall.
"Pray come to me at once.
Cécile Délisle."

These she sent off immediately. "I wonder which of the two will come to me first," she said, with a sad, pale smile. "The Inspector is a mile away, Jack is three hundred; but I think I can bet on Jack."

"I am in trouble." Jack Heathcote was standing in his stables, discussing with some grooms a swelling on a hunter's fetlock, when the words were handed to him: "I am in trouble!" The next moment he was dashing at full speed towards the manor, and the next was bawling orders through the house like a madman to his scurrying servants. In half-an-hour he was hastening up to London.

But the Inspector beat him by a good many hours. Love cannot drive a train, and, as a motor, is considered inferior to petroleum. If space yielded to the yearning heart, we should all dwell in the stars.

"How of the case, Mr. Inspector?" said Cécile, sitting before Wheeler.

"Ah, miss, don't ask," said Mr. Wheeler; "it's a tangled business. But I think I've hit on the right man at last. I shall soon clap him on the back, if I'm not mistaken."

"That is good. Who is it?"

"Oh, an old hand. He's done three terms of penal servitude already. His appearance exactly corresponds with your description of the man you saw in the train at the journey's end, though, of course, he has disguised himself a bit since, I suppose. However, I found that he *was* prowling about that part of Yorkshire just then. His name is Duncan, *alias* Hawke, *alias* Lewis—no end of *aliases*."

"What was he convicted for before?" asked Cécile.

"Theft, burglary—that kind of thing."

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"Then he is not the man who did the murder," said Cécile. "The man who did the murder did not rob the body; you remember we settled that before. He was not a burglar."

"It was Hawke, miss, with all due respects to you. Something must have prevented him from taking the jewellery from the body, that's all. It was Hawke right enough; it couldn't have been anyone else."

Cécile said nothing, but her lips curved a little with disdain.

"By-the-way," she said, "you never found out who did steal the lady's jewellery? You have not recovered the jewellery, I think?"

"No, miss, no," said Mr. Wheeler; "all that part of the matter is still wrapped in mystery. I did go back again to Wilson's farm, you know, in Thorgill Beck, to make sure that he didn't have the things. But it's quite certain that he didn't. I don't know what to make of it."

Cécile smiled. The jewellery, about which Inspector Wheeler was so much at a loss, was in her trunk upstairs. She said nothing about this fact, however. The locket contained a likeness of a member of the Wentworth family; the murder was, in reality, a Hilton scandal. In the hopeless confusion of Mr. Wheeler's mind as to the whole mystery of the murder, she saw no advantage in revealing what she had discovered. But she said:

"I have reason, Mr. Wheeler, for believing that the murderer was the *husband* of the lady. Such a man as the Hawke you describe would hardly be that, I think?"

"Well, no, miss — he would not. But, with due respect to you, I stick to my view. Hawke was the man right enough. I shall soon have my hand on his shoulder."

"You have not recovered the jewellery, I think?"

"Very well, Mr. Wheeler. But now I have a far more important matter to lay before you. Look at this note. It was left for me by my friend, Miss Edith Wentworth, Lady Hilton's niece. She has run away from home."

Mr. Wheeler read the note, and pondered.

"This is queer," he said. "I suppose there's some love affair at the bottom of it—some secret passion?"

"But, no!" said Cécile. "You reason well when you have a clear clue; but you do not *guess* well, Inspector. You do not see well *in the dark*. You lack divination—the instinct of the unknown. You note that my friend says here: 'I am not what I seem.' What do you think she means by that?"

"Clearly, she has done something wrong—something which her conscience cannot endure to think of among her friends," said Mr. Wheeler.

"Good!" said Cécile. "She—or her father. She—or her mother! You know, Inspector, in the aristocrat classes in this country the children in very truth bear all the social sins of their parents in full measure, is it not?"

"But are her father and mother alive?"

"No—they are dead. Her father died long ago. Her mother only a few weeks ago. But it is not necessary that they should be alive for her to be ashamed of them. An old sin is not less shameful than a new. It is an old sin which has banished her now. Of this old sin she has only just heard; and it was on hearing it that she decided that she was unfit for the society of pure and gentle people."

"How do you know that she has only just heard it?" asked the Inspector.

"Because I saw her a week ago. Her heart was perfectly light and careless; she did not know it then."

Cécile was looking upward, with her far-away gaze, the left eye half closed.

"And do you know, miss, by what means she could have suddenly learnt this secret?" asked the Inspector.

"Yes. I will tell you. On the day of her flight she was visited by two men, here. They came together. One of them was a gentleman—a Dr. Danton. The other was well dressed, but not, the servants say, a gentleman. Dr. Danton is in love with Miss Wentworth; is very like her in face, and has a peculiar influence over her mind. I cannot explain it—but it is so. She, however, is in love with someone else—an officer, the nephew of Lady Hilton. Now, my belief is, that in order to induce her to fly with him, Dr. Danton, during that visit, revealed to her some disreputable fact connected with her parents, or one of her parents; and that the other man acted in some way as a proof of the assertions he made."

"I follow you, miss. Which one of the parents do you think—father or mother?"

"Her father was a man of honour—a Wentworth. If he had ever done anything dishonourable he would have committed the suicide; but he died a natural death. Edith's mother, on the other hand, was, it is supposed, a person of doubtful character. The disclosure of Dr. Danton therefore, had reference to her."

"Dr. Danton must have *known* her then during her life?" observed Mr. Wheeler.

"Yes—that is the one grand fact which fills my mind, Inspector. Dr. Danton *must have known her*, if the facts which he disclosed to Edith were not pure invention; or, if he did not know her, he knows one or more persons who knew her. Dr. Danton is therefore the clue to Julie Wentworth and her life—and, Inspector, her death."

"Did she die mysteriously?"

"Yes."

"Well, but it ought not to be so difficult to find him. What sort of man is he?"

"A very tall and big man; sallow, with a moustache and large imperial; with a high, slanting, shining forehead, bald at the temples."

"If he hasn't left the country, we should soon find him," said Wheeler, "and Miss Wentworth with him."

"I am not sure," answered Cécile; "he was seen alone in the streets by Captain Musgrave just after his interview with her; she was not then with him; but she may have arranged to meet him somewhere afterwards. I am not sure. We may be sure, however, that they will not be found in the same house until there has been time for a

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marriage to take place between them. I can tell you that from my knowledge of Miss Wentworth's character."

"And what kind of looking man was the other fellow?" asked the Inspector.

"He was a short, massive man, with bronzed shaven face."

The Inspector started.

"Your description puts me in mind of my friend Hawke, the man you noticed standing in the railway compartment. He had a long beard when I last saw him. But that's nothing at all."

"And I you!" she whispered into his ear.

"I have had the same thought," said Cécile, with closed eyes. "We shall see. At any rate, Inspector, you will do your best to find Miss Wentworth for us, is it not? Many hearts are breaking for want of her. Oh, use your wits and find her for me! Meanwhile, mine will not be idle, my faith!"

"Oh, you can rely upon me, miss, as far as that goes," said Mr. Wheeler. "My opinion is that the man we've got to find is — Hawke. Hawke's at the bottom of a good deal of the mischief that's done in this world, I assure you!"

Hawke was rather a fixed idea with the Inspector. Cécile's lips again took on their slight curve of disdain; but she held out her hand to the Inspector, who took it, and then creaked with respectful step towards the door.

Dr. Danton had known Julie Wentworth! That was the thought that haunted Cécile; and yet not Julie Wentworth, but Julie L! "J. L." were the initials on the handkerchief of the murdered woman. The photograph in the locket told her that the "J." meant "Julie." Her next care would be to find out what "L." meant; to discover the man whose name began with "L."; to discover whatever relation subsisted between this man and Dr. Danton, and so, in all probability, to discover the secret of Edith's flight. The secret of her flight might give some clue to her whereabouts. She spent a night of sleepless agony waiting for Jack Heathcote.

By eleven the next morning he was with her. She was alone in the breakfast-room when he was ushered in to her. Lady Hilton was ill in bed.

"Ah, you have come!" she said.

She rose to meet him with frankly happy face, and held out her hand.

Jack was all redness and dismay and downcast eyes.

"I—I was rather sorry that you were in trouble, you know," he stammered.

"Only '*rather*'?"

"Well—very—intensely—I mean."

"Ah! That was good. And you took all this long journey on my account, is it not?"

"Oh, no, not at all. I had some little trifling business in London of—of very great importance, to see to. Horses, you know; that kind of thing."

"But what am I to do?" said Cécile to herself. "The man can't expect *me* to 'propose' to him, and *he* will never do it." She added aloud:

"But—you are not complimentary. I was sure when you entered the room that it was my telegram which had brought you. And that would have made me feel so pleased. Is it nothing to you that I should be pleased, then?"

"It is everything to me—that is, you know, I am rather pleased to see you pleased."

"And when I am in trouble, don't you care at all?"

"Oh, then I'm in trouble, too. No one likes to see another one in trouble, does he?"

"No. But you are very provoking and hard-hearted."

"Who?"

"You, sir."

"I hard-hearted? Quite a mistake, I assure you. My heart's made of wax."

"*Bee's*-wax?"

"Well—ha! ha! you know what I mean. People think I'm hard-hearted—got no feeling—made of stone—that kind of thing. But it isn't so. Sometimes I have a little feeling."

"You should show it, then."

"Well, one doesn't like to, does one?—before everybody."

"Am I 'everybody'?"

"Well, no—I don't exactly mean that."

"An Englishman should be frank and bold, and say out what he means."

"Do you like an Englishman?" asked Jack with quick interest.

"Very much," confessed Cécile.

"A Yorkshireman, now—what is your opinion of a Yorkshireman?"

"I like him." Her eyes looked downward. She was smiling with a sweet, cunning meaningfulness.

"You like a Yorkshireman better than a Frenchman?"

"A *lot* better," she said.

A bitter-sweet pain like honey and peppermint began to work and tinkle in his secret heart.

"Well! That is wonderfully decent of you!" The words heaved forth from his labouring breast. "*I* am a Yorkshireman, you know."

"Yes, I know. I like them immensely. There is nobody in the whole world that I like half so well as them."

"Well, now! and I like you for saying it. I think it most awfully sweet of you."

"Do you? But *you* don't like *me* half as much as *I* love *them*."

"You think not?" cried Jack Heathcote with wild eyes. "Oh, that is perfect nonsense, you know! Why, I love the very house you live in—I love you so madly and awfully!"

In a moment she was on his breast.

"And I you!" she whispered into his ear, biting it. "I love—I love—oh, Jack! I can't tell you how much—always from the first, you silly—better than anybody—better than Edith!"

Jack kissed her rapturously. She pushed him away, laughing.

CHAPTER XV.

Cécile on the Track.

"But you understand," she said, "that I shall never marry until she is found. *Never*, remember. And the reason I sent for you was to tell you that, and to get you to help me to find her. Have you got a lot of money?"

"Oh, rather," said Jack.

"I have sent to the Paris bank for an amount for myself,"

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proceeded Cécile. "I have won £3,000, but have it not yet. Meanwhile I want some, which you must give me. And you have to come a railway journey with me into Dorsetshire this very day. If I take you about with me, will you promise to be good, and not kiss me?"

"Quite so. I promise anything you like," said Jack.

He and Cécile accordingly left Waterloo at about two o'clock, though Lady Hilton looked with wonderment on this quixotic travelling about the world of a young unmarried lady and her lover together. She knew Cécile's wayward will too well, however, to make any audible protest; and Cécile, for her part, knew her man in Jack Heathcote. Jack was not so much her lover as her slave.

By midnight of that day the two had taken three rooms at a rustic inn in a Dorsetshire village, called Crossley. It was the village nearest Chisholme Park, the small estate where, twenty years before, Ernest Wentworth, the husband of Julie, and the father of Edith, had breathed his last.

"Are we going to be here for long?" asked Jack Heathcote, just before they parted for the night.

"I hope not, dear," she said. "It may be a week, or more. Oh, I am very sleepy!"

"What is it we are come after?"

"Something connected with Edith. It is no good telling you. You will not understand. Good-night."

"We are not supposed to kiss at all, are we?"

"Yes, dear. Once at night, when we are going to bed. Once in the morning. Good-night."

She held up her lips, sleepily, and Jack put his on them; a chaste and brotherly kiss. Their two bedrooms were on each side of a large, low-ceilinged sitting-room, provided with two ivy-clad oriel windows.

She spied an old man raking a garden bed.

In the morning, early as Jack was up, Cécile had gone out before-hand—on foot, the landlord told him. The hedges were just beginning to mantle with a flush of green, and the rooks in the trees were cawing the advent of spring. The bees were out in foraging parties, and all the land looked alive, getting ready for the big dinner and lord-mayor gluttony of the long summer. On and on, for four miles through the hedges, along the meadow-paths, walked Cécile with brisk, light step, drinking in the fresh balm of the morning air.

She came at last to the outskirts of the estate of Chisholme, and passed through the open lodge gates. On the previous night she had heard from her landlord that the house was now occupied by a retired merchant from Taunton. The blinds were still drawn, and the family in bed.

But she spied an old man raking a garden-bed on the lawn, and approached him with her most conciliating smile.

"I want to see a servant who was employed at this house about twenty years ago," she said. "You may, no doubt, be able to put me on my track."

The old man wore an early-morning face, and kept on sourly raking his flower-bed, as he replied:

"'Taint likely as I can. Times be hard enough as they are, without troubling yer head——"

She interrupted him with the cold touch of half-a-sovereign on his hand.

"I think you can tell me," she said. "I see you are a native of these parts."

"How the bloomin' do *you* know that?" said the old man sourly; but his tough old face wore the semblance of a smile.

"That blue worsted cap on your head tells me all about you, you see. The women of these parts make them, I think? My landlord at the inn wears one and his son another. But the colour of yours is so faded that it must be twenty—forty—years old. You are certainly native here, my friend."

"Well, I'm darned if you ben't right!" said the old fellow with a knowing head-shake. "Who's it you say you want?"

"A servant. She worked here twenty years ago. I do not know her name."

"Then I'm blowed if *I* know it for you."

"But, yes, I understand that. What I want you to tell me is whether you know *anybody* who was a servant here when the Hon. Ernest Wentworth, who once owned this property, lived here."

"Now, *he* wur a fine free-handed man, if you like," mused the old boy; "they were better days nor these, mum!"

"But about the servants? See if you cannot remember. Do try!"

"There wur Em'ly Bowden. *Her* lived with them a year or two."

"Very good. Where can one find Emily Bowden?"

"Her's under the ground safe enough."

He digged in a downward direction with his gnarled forefinger.

"Then she won't help me at all," said Cécile with a woe-begone vacancy of expression. "Anyone else?"

"There wur Nancy Hawley, if I rightly remember."

"And she?"

"Oh, her! Don't talk of *her*. *Her* run away to Lunnon with Jim Richards many a year a-gone. A report went that Richards wur drownded."

"But no. I do not desire to hear the history of Richards. I have not so much time, you see. Any other *servant*?"

"I forgot Annie Hall. *Her* should be alive somewhere abouts. Is her the one you're after?"

"But yes—the very one. You must help me to find her."

"That's just what I can't do. I've lost track of her this many a year."

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"Was she married?"

"Aye—twice."

"Was Hall the name of the second husband?"

"No—the first. That's the name I always knew her by. I don't recollect the name of the second."

"Is she in the neighbourhood at all?"

"Don't think so. She went away somewhere. I did know, but I misremember where. It wurn't fur, though."

That day Jack Heathcote spent in making enquiries on horseback far and near for Annie Hall. He returned late at night dispirited, with no further information than that the second husband's name was West.

The next day Cécile and Jack parted on two horses at the inn, and went out in different ways, seeking for information; at eleven in the night Cécile returned to find Jack just come back. He had no news. But she had discovered that Annie Hall had married West at a village twenty miles away called Wixford.

On the third day she took Jack with her to Wixford, seeing how he pined and moped when separated even for a few hours from her. With intense interest, in the gloomy little vestry of the parish church, they pored together over the register of marriages.

They learned that West was by trade a carpenter, and was born in the Cornish town of Quiltering.

In the hope of finding out his life's history, all trace of him having been obliterated in that part of Devonshire, they set out the next day, by train, for the neighbourhood of Quiltering.

Meanwhile, into nearly every newspaper in the three kingdoms, an advertising agency in London had inserted, at the bidding of Cécile, an announcement to Annie West, that, if she would but write, she would hear of something to her advantage.

CHAPTER XVI.

Tracked.

The Rue Morcelle is situated in one of the meanest and most squalid parts of Paris in the environs of the Marais. It is a bye-street leading out of the Rue de Retour, and is in the centre of quite a hive of manufacturing industries, toy-factories, feather-factories, book-binding establishments, depôts and large-fronted warehouses, all mingled with big dwelling-houses of the congregating working-class, in a network of narrow streets.

In her little top room.

Paris, which was the city of her childhood, was more like home to Edith Wentworth than any other city out of England. Her very first instinct, therefore, as soon as she had determined on flight, was to make for Paris. At first she lived in a very good sort of environment in lodgings in St. Germain; but finally she gravitated downward to the depth of the Rue Morcelle.

She felt herself an outcast. The child of impossible parents, and she fully realised that their debasement, their vulgarity, their sin, was hers. She had no hope, no wish to disassociate herself from them; her candid nature felt it to be impossible. For such as her, with her stained birth, her unspeakable father, to marry an aristocrat, to live with aristocrats, was out of the question. For the totally hopeless, for the infinitely separated and unrelated, Paris, even more than London, is the place for a living burial.

She resolved to make sufficient struggle in order to continue to breath, and lived in a languid pain, waiting for death.

She had never dreamed, really, what it is for a human being to suffer the want of plenty; that had been far from her; and in resolving "to struggle to continue to breathe," she thought as a child. The struggle to do even so much was very much harder than she supposed.

The value of the few things she had brought with her was soon exhausted. One by one they disappeared into the Mont de Piété; and the cruel day came nearer.

She knew the French language with perfect fluent accuracy, and had a certain cleverness and acquaintance with the literary trick. In her St. Germain weeks, she wrote hard, day and night, for the weekly journals. But everything she wrote was returned to her unused. Then in despair, feeling the pinch of want, she descended as low as the Rue Morcelle.

No. 13, where she found a room, was a vast five-floored pile, boasting a courtyard, and a *concierge*. It was sordid, but hardly squalid. The crowds of humanity which thronged in every corner of it were all of them persons in the lower depths of shabby-gentility, faded and wretched, but not desperately debased. Edith had obtained a tiny room, high at the top and back, a garret with bare sloping roof for ceiling, for which she paid three francs a week.

For ten days she wandered in search of manual work of some kind, and, during that time, sharply realised the great vacuum on the edge of which she stood. She had no knowledge or suspicion of the agencies which exist for the procuring of work for the "seekers." It did not enter her mind to be a *bonne*, or a clerk. She saw the *grisettes* of Paris tripping to and from the factories or shops, and their contented, limited life grew to be her ideal of attainment.

She remembered with horror that she had not cultivated any of the clever knacks in which even some high-born ladies excel. Could she sew, embroider? Hardly sufficiently well to earn a living. But she had been rather skilful in drawing as a girl, and could trace out a decent curve with tolerable steadiness of hand. She was, moreover, not without a certain amount of invention, and thus she came to obtain a footing at a *modiste's*, as a designer of ladies patterns.

The work she did at home in her little top room. There were two wooden chairs, a deal table, and deal wash-hand-stand. In the corner was the narrow bed, which she daily made with her own hands. This was all the furniture she had been able to procure. The only window was very small, and was brightened by the presence of a single flower-pot.

By working all the day, designing and cutting out, inventing, and going to and fro between her lodging and the *modiste's*, she was able to earn about sixteen francs a week, sometimes a little more, sometimes less.

Her brilliant colour faded, and purplish semi-circles formed beneath her eyes.

To her other self—to Cécile—she was sometimes tempted to write for money. Cécile was an heiress, with unlimited supplies. But she feared. A letter would reveal the fact that she was in Paris. With a desperate cringing sensitiveness, she clung to her unknown retreat and seclusion; it was her little warmth in the bitter cold of the world.

One night a man looked in at the window of the *concierge's* lodge at No. 13, and asked in very bad French:

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"Is there among your tenants an English lady?"

"No, m'sieur, I think not," said the man.

No one knew Edith as an Englishwoman, for she spoke the perfect French of a cultured Parisienne.

The man—he had the burly figure of Mr. Hawke—went

Saw Edith walk out of the modiste's.

out, and walked down the street; round a corner, he stopped where another man was waiting for him.

"She ain't there," said Mr. Hawke wearily. "My belief is she ain't in Paris at all. I'm sick of this jolly job, mate."

"You can be as sick as you like, Hawke," said Dr. Lemaitre, "but you do not touch the funds until you find her. She is in Paris."

"You don't know that."

"I *feel* that she is here——"

"Ah, that's all very well, mate, but——"

"Be silent. She is here. It is the place she would naturally come to. If you cannot find her, *I* shall."

They walked away together.

The truth is not always in a well. We seek her deeply, and cannot find her, and presently, of her own accord, she reveals to us her smiling face.

But her taste is sometimes questionable. Mr. Hawke, for instance, was one of her favourites.

Lounging listlessly about at a street corner a few days after, thinking that it was time to go and have something to eat, he saw Edith walk out of the *modiste's*, a bundle of tissue paper peeping from under her cloak.

He coolly walked behind her to No. 13, Rue Morcelle, and saw her disappear within the house.

He heard from the *concierge* that she occupied room No. 165, at the top of the building.

Dr. Lemaitre, living in princely style on the fatness of Musgrave's thousands, occupied at this time a mansion in the fashionable Rue de Rome. That night as he walked with Hawke towards the Marais, he was as gay as a schoolboy.

He kept clapping Hawke on the back.

"Mr. Hawke," he said, "I congratulate you. You are formed for Fortune. You were born to Empire. To-morrow, at this time, you will have £10,000 in your pockets. But beware of the gaming-table, Mr. Hawke——"

"Oh, shut it, mate," interposed Hawke.

"The gaming-table and the drink. Paris is full of far keener wits than yours, Mr. Hawke. And when this is gone you will get no more sums like it, I promise you. I am going to be married, Mr. Hawke."

Presently they stood together in the dimly-lit street watching the dark exterior of No. 13.

"I think," said Lemaitre, "that it would be better for you to present yourself before her first. Then I will appear in the character of deliverer and liberator. Your daughter, I fear, does not regard you with the filial feelings due to your merits, Mr. Hawke."

"Why can't you shut it?" said Hawke. "I don't suppose she thinks much more of *you*."

"Yes!" cried Lemaitre, his eyes flashing with sudden passion and desire, "she does! Edith! Edith! You are mine—at last—my love."

(To be continued.)

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A LOT can be done with £100, but, of course, if you are sufficiently wealthy to ignore this offer, pass along to something more exciting.

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£100 will be given to the reader who collects the greatest number from ***P.W.*** and ***SHORT STORIES;*** another £100 to the reader who collects from ***HOME NOTES;*** another £100 to the newsagent who collects from ***P.W.*** and ***S.S.;*** and another £100 to the newsagent who collects from ***HOME NOTES.*** In addition to this there will also be

ONE PRIZE OF £25. FIVE EACH OF £5.
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Newsagents' coupons must not be collected by readers.

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NO COUPONS TO BE SENT IN BEFORE JANUARY, 1898.

THE MOST COMFORTABLE CHURCH IN THE WORLD.

A MOST interesting article upon the most comfortable church in the world appears in *The Sunday Reader* for March 27th. The church is a truly up-to-date sanctuary. There are dining-rooms, reception-rooms and drawing-rooms in the building, and a hydraulic lift, made with all the latest improvements, carries the worshippers from the ground floor up to their sanctuary. *The Sunday Reader* article is well illustrated, and if you get a copy you will certainly agree that the church described is, without doubt, a truly remarkable place of worship.

The Sunday Reader for March 27th also contains an interesting interview with Dr. Mandel Creighton, Bishop of London, and portraits of the oldest married couple in Great Britain.

The paper is full of interesting articles, anecdotes, and stories, and

A NEW PUZZLE PICTURE COMPETITION,

in which a sum of over £40 is offered in prizes, commences in the issue of March 27th.

THE SUNDAY READER.

Ready March 27th.] [One Penny.

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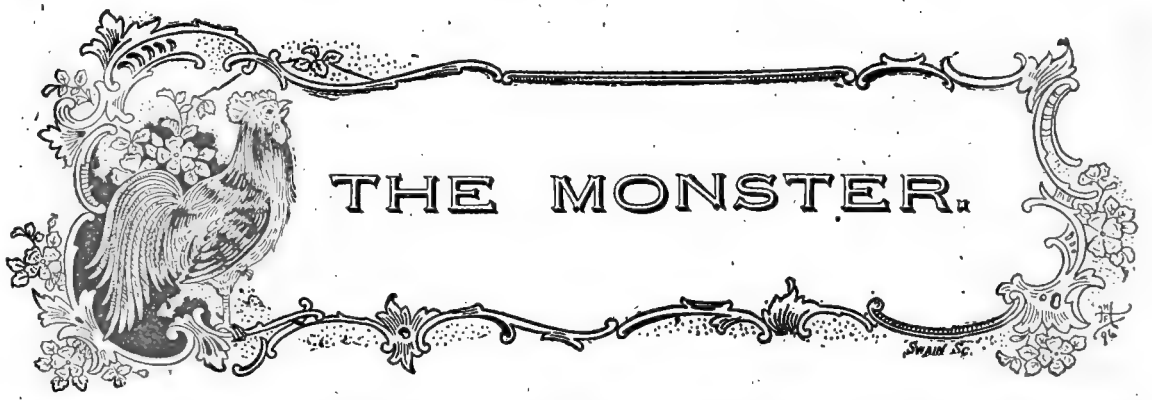

THE MONSTER.

One or two miles from Coventry, on a hill overlooking the pretty River Sherborne, stands the residence of Thomas Corbins, a very honest man, who has accumulated his money in manufacturing revolvers—or perhaps it was bicycles.

Thomas Corbins has one misfortune and one quality—the misfortune of being a widower and the quality of living quite simply. One would be far from guessing the truth to measure his fortune by the size of his house or the luxury of his retinue.

He has only one child, a daughter of twenty, and a beauty, but he has two younger sisters, each blessed with two children. During holiday time these kinsfolk spend two weeks with him, so the small house, at the time that this story opens, was as full as a Swiss hotel.

It was a frightfully hot morning last July when Miss Corbins at an early hour descended to the kitchen to give her orders. She was rather shocked to notice that the Irish cook did not rise from her chair as she entered. We all know, however, that we must be indulgent, even to the point of cowardice, to a cook, especially at a time when the house is full of company. Dorothy Corbins contracted her pretty eyebrows at this impertinence, but pretended to find the attitude natural, and said meekly:

"It is warm, isn't it, Bridget?"

"Warum?" replied the Irish girl. "Sure and it's only warum ye find it, miss? Well, be jabers, it's hot I call it, infernally hot. I shall be afther laving."

"But, Bridget, your month is not up for eight days."

"And ye think I make that a difficulty? An' faix, ye can kape a week's wages. My hilth is more than money. It wad be betther to lose twinty shillings than ye should be makin' ov me an ould woman at thirty."

An hour later Erin's daughter had disappeared, and Dorothy Corbins, not without baking herself, had cooked the breakfast for ten people, or rather for nine, as her father always breakfasted in town a few paces from his office. While serving the dishes she notified the "family boarding house" of the catastrophe which had overtaken her.

"As for the cooking, that I shall do until I can replace Bridget, but if at the same time I must play lady, preside at table, and entertain in the parlour, I shall go crazy. So please don't expect to see much of me until someone is found; and that won't be an easy matter considering the season."

Dorothy proved herself up to the mark. Besides Bridget, who had just deserted, the housework was done by a single maid. After considerable coaxing, she consented to do extra work provided she was not asked to approach the range. According to her story she was subject to sick headaches; the fact was she feared to spoil her complexion, which her "young man" declared was incomparable.

A few days later a foreign friend arrived. His moustache was blonde and his eyes were blue, but of a blonde and a blue with which the Anglo-Saxon race had nothing to do. Although carefully dressed, his clothes had not that stiff, impersonal style of the English swell for whom to be well dressed apparently means to be christening a new suit. Moreover, the cut of his linen, and still more, the form of his cravat, bespoke the Parisian. In fact Max de Résal had but recently arrived in England.

After opening the wicket gate, the stranger studied the house as he walked up the path, which took a sharp angle, picturesquely softened by thick growth of ivy.

A retriever dog, asleep on one of the porch chairs, woke up and began to bark furiously at Résal's approach, and in the death-like silence which reigned the barking served as a signal of alarm. A servant maid with flaxen hair appeared on the balcony of one of the Queen Anne windows on the second floor, and evidently awaited some questions from the visitor.

"Mrs. Corbins?" asked and repeated the young man, with a desperate effort towards the right pronunciation.

He tried Corbins, Courbins, then Keurbins, and finally Corbince, without success. Proper names are the stumbling-blocks to a new-comer in a country—and in a language.

"The devil," he cried in good French, "this must be Mr. Corbins' house, the cabman told me so."

The flaxen-haired girl made a circular movement with her thumb, and called out something of which Résal caught but one word, "kitchen," after which she disappeared.

While skirting the side of the house, Max glanced into the parlour through a large bow-window. The room seemed deserted. The chandelier, dreadful in its form, was enough to make a man of taste faint. But some canvases from the brush of well-known painters decorated the walls. It was quite evident that Thomas Corbins had a fine fortune and spent it intelligently.

He approached a large awning beneath which he saw a door open, and without further ceremony he entered.

A feminine form was moving in the room, the blinds of which were half closed to keep out the sun and the flies. The cook turned round, but he could only distinguish the outlines of a slender and elegant figure in the shadow.

"Is that you, Willie?" she asked in her mother tongue.

"I regret to say that I am not Mr. Willie," replied Max in

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his best English, which was not good. "I am a stranger who wishes to see Mr. Corbins, and, by Jupiter, it is not easy to find someone to speak to in this house."

Dorothy was breaking her eggs, carefully separating the yolks from the whites, and took no notice of this complaint.

"The family have gone off for the day. As to Mr. Corbins, naturally he is at his factory. You must go there to find him, or rather you ought to have stopped there, as you passed by it."

"How did I know that? Besides, I did not come to see Mr. Corbins on business."

"Maybe you have a letter of introduction to him then?"

"Yes, I have; here it is."

Miss Corbins took the unsealed envelope and drew out the card which it contained, and read it to the immense stupefaction of Résal, who never imagined that the free and easy manners of English servants could go so far.

The letter was short—only three lines. The Marquis de Saint-Cybars begged to recall himself to the memory of Mr. Thomas Corbins, and present to him his best friend, the Vicomte Max de Résal, who would travel in Great Britain for some months. It is necessary to explain that Saint-Cybars had crossed the Channel two or three months before, without concealing from his friends that he consented to brave sea-sickness in the hopes of marrying a bag of gold. The said bag had been found at Brighton, and belonged to an heiress far from pretty, whose conquest had not cost much effort to a practitioner of Pierre's merits.

Married on the spot, poor Lily Emerson was not happy, as it was easy to see from her letters. Without being an intimate friend of the young Marquise, Dorothy had been told of the bad conduct of Saint-Cybars, who had been presented as a future model husband.

This is the reason why, after having placed the letter from the odious man on the table, she continued to break her eggs, at the same time laughing in her sleeve at the funny side of the situation. Her mouth drawn up at the corners by a half smile rendered her still more fascinating as she indulged in these reflections: "Here is a young Vicomte who appears to me to be looking for a bag of gold also. I am sure that this dreadful Saint-Cybars has made out a list for him. How shameful it is to think that this intriguer will find a Vicomtesse among us all the more readily because he certainly is a handsome fellow. But Dorothy Corbins is not for him. She is not such a silly as to make one more unhappy woman in the world for the satisfaction of having embroidered coronets on her linen."

Alas! It was quite an easy affair for Dorothy not to marry Max de Résal, but it was indeed too bad to be compelled to cook his dinner. Should he find Mr. Corbins at his office, most assuredly they would return together for dinner. A fine pleasure in truth to receive a stranger, a Frenchman, a Vicomte at a time when one has not a cook.

As the young girl was thus reflecting, Max's eyes having grown accustomed to the dim light of the kitchen, he said to himself that English cooks were still more remarkable for their beauty than for their free manner. Although his tastes as well as his education had preserved him from certain flirtations, he did not seem disposed to take his departure, and he asked nothing better than to enjoy a chat with this pretty creature. But what in the world to talk about?

It was she who resumed the conversation. Without stopping the mixing of her cake, she had thought of a means to prevent Max from growing old in Coventry, and in advance she was amused at the device which she was going to employ to put this dot-hunter to flight before he should wish to carry the acquaintance farther. Suddenly employing the French tongue, which she spoke in a praiseworthy way, she asked:

"So it is on business that you desire to see Mr. Corbins?"

Max, dumfounded, raised his hands.

"Now just hear her speak French! Mademoiselle, were you in my country I should declare that you were a princess in disguise. But ever since I reached England I have sworn never to be astonished at anything. Did I learn that it was required for a good cook in Great Britain to possess the brevet of sea captain in her letter of recommendation, I would say the thing is quite natural, I have had so many puzzling experiences for the past month. In spite of all, if I dared to employ an expression of your language, I should say that the cook of Mr. Thomas Corbins was 'holding the record.' We will add, then, if a spark of intelligence is left in me, that I wish to make to this gentleman simply a visit of politeness."

"But he does not wish to be disturbed when he is at his factory by 'simple visits of politeness.'"

"Nothing could be more natural," said the young man, "only, as apparently he is at his factory all day, we must conclude that he is not visible to tourists like myself."

"We see very few tourists here," insinuated the pseudo cook. "Frenchmen, particularly, seldom come here for the mere pleasure of travelling."

"On my word," said Résal, seating himself on a chair, "I am not an engineer, a painter, a singer, nor a novelist."

"So I guess why you visit England," continued Dorothy, beating her eggs. "You are looking for an heiress. Oh, you need not be afraid to admit the fact to a poor servant girl like myself."

"Young, marriageable men are always on the look-out for heiresses," admitted Max as a sort of axiom.

"During the season it is at Brighton the heiresses are to be found; you must go there."

"I have come from there. I spent fifteen days and fifteen nights, if such can be called nights. I am worn to the bone with fatigue; another week would have killed me. I left that delicious but infernal spot this morning. Of course, you know Brighton?"

"The Corbins spent last season there," explained Dorothy, who, to say the least, was as much amused as Max. "And did you not meet with any success?"

"Not the smallest in the world, and, goodness knows, I have lunched, dined, danced, yachted, played tennis, swallowed concerts, and undergone excursions. But not one of these young ladies paid the slightest attention to me."

As if to console him, she said: "The 'dots' to be found at Brighton are too big for a mere Vicomte. Now, if you had only been a Marquis! Monsieur de Saint-Cybars arranged his affair very quickly. I almost saw the—bargain completed. Poor Lily Emerson, she has found out that a coronet is not sufficient to produce happiness."

"Saint-Cybars behaved like a brute," said Max. "To begin with he never loved his wife. As for myself I would never make a marriage of that kind."

"What, monsieur, you are hunting for a poor

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English girl? Oh, well, sir, you will find them; there are some!"

"I am poor myself," replied Max quite simply, "and I cannot earn my living. So I must needs have a rich partner. But I wish to love her and wish her to love me. I desire above all things that we may be a happy couple. In truth I do not think that that will be a difficult thing with me."

"These are very fine phrases, monsieur," said Dorothy, with a mischievous twinkle in her black eyes. "They have not fallen on deaf ears. I know what there remains for me to do."

"What?" protested Résal. "You believe——"

"I believe nothing at all. You would like my help—rest easy; Miss Corbins will receive your little profession of faith with not even a comma left out. In the meantime go to see the father. Do not fear to disturb him. Poor man! It is not every day that he is asked for his daughter, and still less by a Vicomte. Gracious goodness; it is not he who will throw stumbling-blocks in your way."

For a quarter of an hour Max believed that he had been dreaming; at this insinuation, full of danger, he woke up:

"What do you mean? Is Miss Corbins——"

"Oh, she is a model of virtue and goodness. If only the physical were equal to the moral."

"What, is she a monster?" asked Max, drawing nearer.

"Well, that depends on what you mean by a monster. Some people will tell you that she is humpbacked. In my opinion that is going too far. I admit that her neck is in her shoulders, and her figure—is sadly wanting. Unfortunately, her complexion is like her figure, wanting also. Remember, however, that with us men are hard to please. The girls are not married for their money. That is why I say it again, you have every chance of being received by the father, at least."

The shrewd girl never doubted but that Max would reply: "It is a shame that she is so ugly, but in as much as she is a model of virtue—and, since there are other advantages to compensate for this ugliness—one has to sacrifice something when it comes to a marriage." Then what embarrasssment for this intriguer when she would reply: "Monsieur, you are speaking to Dorothy Corbins." Poor Vicomte, if he stayed to dinner after that, really he had a strong nerve.

Instead of replying Max drew a louis from his pocket. Did he intend to bribe her? That would be even worse than cynicism. Dorothy had already raised her hand to show him to the door.

"Young woman," said he, "will you do me a service? Do not mention one word about my visit."

"Why not? What do you intend to do?" stammered the beautiful Dorothy, greatly troubled by this unexpected request.

"I intend to sleep in London. It is only a few hours' journey from here, is it not?"

The young heiress would not believe her ears. Wishing to push the test as far as possible, she said:

"But, monsieur, do not lose sight of the fact that Father Corbins will give one hundred thousand cash. There is no knowing but what he would give two if pushed."

"You pain me," said Résal, laying his louis on the table. "I would have thought you higher-minded. But that is your business. Only be discreet, for I do not wish to pass for a cad in Miss Corbins' eyes."

He looked again at Dorothy, then with a heavy sigh he turned away, leaving his gold-piece on the table.

When he entered his room at the hotel he made an effort to collect his ideas, but feeling that he would not succeed, he went out. The woman who filled his mind, who haunted his curiosity, who astonished, amused, and was not far from charming him, this woman was a cook. It is true that her figure, her eyes, her smile, her white arms, might serve as an excuse for any madness. But after all, she was a cook. She wore an apron and beat eggs like every other cook in the world. And he, the correct man, the nobleman of good descent, was wasting three days of his life, because, by chance, he had fallen across this Circe of the saucepan.

Of what use was it to deceive himself? If he were delayed in his departure, it certainly was not because of the Corbins' dinner, which in fact he could refuse if he wished—it was to give himself the chance of seeing again the apparition which filled his memory.

When the next day Max turned up Dorothy was quite content to see him, but in no wise surprised.

"Well," she said, "you have come for an answer to your card. Here it is, from Miss Corbins' hand, who has been obliged to go out again to-day. Indeed, ill luck pursues you."

"Less, perhaps, than Miss Corbins supposes," said the Vicomte, putting the note in his pocket.

"What! You are not going to read what she has written?"

"Confound the 'monster,' I have plenty of time for that. There is something else that interests me more."

Dorothy gave him a peculiar look, less limpid than usual, and then, choosing her words, she said:

"You do me an honour that I do not deserve. What I am now, I shall be all my life. But after all," she added, laughing, "does it count for nothing to be a good cook?"

This consolation scarcely appealed to Résal, who muttered, unaware that he was doing so aloud:

"It is a shame!"

"Why is it a shame?" asked this princess in disguise.

With the sorrow and wrench of an inevitable parting he kept his own counsel, and replied:

"I had hoped that you had been created for another destiny. At least you are happy here?"

"Quite happy, perfectly happy," said Dorothy, her cheeks brightened by a rosy tint.

"Then it is all right—and what are you making now?" continued the young man, who tried to put the conversation on normal ground.

"Sherry wine jelly," she replied, endeavouring to steady her voice. "By-the-way, what are your favourite dishes, for this note which you will not read invites you to dinner to-morrow."

"Confound the dinner, it's a nuisance! I will go back to the hotel and write to the 'monster' that I am inconsolable, but urgent business prevents my accepting. I ought to have followed my first impulse and gone away yesterday. Life is too short to waste it in waiting the Corbins' pleasure."

"Monsieur, they mean it for the best. This evening you would have stumbled across a family of not very amusing sisters and cousins. To-morrow you will be alone."

"With the 'monster'? Very kind, I am sure. That decides me. I only wish I were already in the train, and still more I wish that I had never seen Coventry!"

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He stood up ready to take his departure, for in fact it was necessary to cut short this situation, which was contrary to good sense, when Max saw something which he could not endure. Bending her pretty figure, stiffening her body in one convulsive effort which justified rather late, 'tis true, her fine colour, Dorothy was vainly endeavouring to uncork a bottle of sherry for which her jelly was waiting. Almost angrily the young man snatched the bottle from her small hands, which were none too strong. When the cork was out, he said:

"You were never intended to do such work, my poor child. It would be so easy for one possessing your intelligence to find some better situation. Permit me to tell you that you are absurd."

"You would appear scarcely less absurd in the eyes of society could you be seen at the present moment, monsieur. But one thing is sure, you are very good."

"I?" he groaned, shrugging his shoulders. "I am not good. I am a man, that is all. If you were ugly and humpbacked as this Corbins girl, do you think that I would help you to do your cooking? And yet you are right to say I should be subject to ridicule; that shows how society has perverted the laws of Nature. Once upon a time a brilliant beauty in a woman was enough to raise her to a throne. What is the use of being handsome to-day? Should I return to France with an heiress on my arm, even though she were a perfect scarecrow, there would be a tussle amongst my neighbours to be the first to congratulate me. But should I marry Venus herself in the garb of a servant, the world would forget my name, and my children would not be able to marry. Ah! the world—it is stupid, cowardly, unjust, odious!"

Dorothy stood with her two hands on the back of a chair, her figure slightly bent, looking at Max with eyes which finished by completely turning the young man's head.

"I implore you not to go away without having dined here with my employers."

"So that I can test your cooking? I should find it detestable—you a cook! I can never, never accustom myself to such an idea."

"Do what I ask, monsieur, for if you think so much of me you ought to find pleasure in eating of my cooking."

Several voices were heard in an adjoining room.

"Go quickly," cried Dorothy. "The family have returned."

Max had already reached the garden, and was creeping behind the bushes in order that the "monster" should not see him; so true it is that heroes are rarely found when it is a question of facing social prejudices.

* * * * *

An hour later Miss Corbins received a polite though formal note that the Vicomte de Résal would accept her gracious invitation.

He walked about all the next day, and while returning to the hotel he met a man in the street. The stranger stared at him for a second with sympathetic interest; then said to him in French:

"Monsieur Vicomte de Résal, I believe."

"Perhaps," said Max. "Have we met somewhere?"

"No, but I am aware of your being in this town. I am Thomas Corbins. An hour ago I heard that my daughter had invited you to dine this evening. Will you come to the house now? You can have a chat with my daughter, who is well acquainted with your country. She is showing the new cook her duties."

"It is possible," exclaimed Max with an interest which, to say the least, was odd, "the other has gone away?"

"Oh, I did not regret her. Too fine a lady. A *poseuse*, as you would call her in your country. Monsieur, if you want to know how a servant in England gives herself airs you must study the type in the country. If only I could follow the example of certain Parisians and pass my life at a hotel so as not to see this sort of cattle."

Max longed to beat him for his stupidity. Here was he condemned to dine at this house without the possible chance of seeing the dismissed cook, perhaps dismissed because of him. This was the last straw.

After a few words he took leave of his host, pretending, which was true indeed, that he was worn out and wished to rest a little at his hotel. Rarely since he had attained the age when most of our joys and sorrows are caused by women had this good fellow experienced such depression of spirits. Thus far his love affairs, or rather escapades—for his heart had never been seriously affected—had always shown himself to be a refined, poetical and sentimental man, so much so indeed that often he had been ridiculed by his friends as not being up-to-date.

He put on his evening dress and wended his way to the Corbins. Naturally it was the maid with the flaxen hair who answered the bell. The double doors of the drawing-room were opened wide, so with firmness and resignation he penetrated into the monster's den.

At the first glance the room seemed deserted and he fancied he was before time; but on closer examination he saw there was a lady seated in the shadow of the bow-window. Never doubting that he was in the presence of Miss Corbins, he advanced, resolved to introduce himself. But at the fourth step he stopped abruptly. The unknown person was evidently of remarkable beauty, though he could not perfectly distinguish her features.

At the same time the sound of male voices reached him from the smoking-room, and clouds from redolent Havanas were floating through the half-open door. Without doubt this unknown lady was the wife of one of the smokers. That she was married her rich toilet and the diamonds sparkling in her ears left no shadow of a doubt to a man accustomed to French usages. So Résal contented himself with a simple bow, all that the situation demanded, and said to himself:

"Miss Corbins might have taken the trouble to be dressed in time to do the honours."

And once more he reviled the "monster." He had directed his steps towards the smoking-room to seek support from Mr. Corbins. But the mysterious lady had turned her face towards him and he stopped petrified, wondering if a certain cook of his acquaintance did not have a twin sister who had had better success in life. There were the same adorable eyes, the same mouth, ready to smile, and the gentle mockery beneath its serious expression. In a word, it was the same beauty enhanced by flowers, jewels, the *décolleté* dress made by a *grande contourière*.

"Great Heavens," sighed the young man almost in a whisper, "I imagine I see her everywhere."

Feeling that he was growing ridiculous in his too evident perplexity, he tore himself from this dream of contemplation and fled hastily to the smoking-room where the gentlemen were talking—Mr. Corbins and a clergyman, who could not be, without breaking all

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human and divine laws, the legitimate possessor of this beautiful woman.

The host welcomed Résal with British hospitality. After presenting him to the clergyman, he said:

"I ought to have been in the drawing-room to have received you, but you saw my daughter whom you already know. Why, here she comes."

The beautiful creature whom Résal had saluted a moment before appeared upon the threshold of the smoking-room.

"Well, shall we go to dinner?" she said gaily. Dorothy had extended her hand to the guest as she would have done to one whom she had seen the evening before, and marched him through the drawing-room, for he would have been unable to budge himself.

"Cheer up," she said in a low voice, laughing. "Am I not loyal? Did I not promise 'to leap the barrier'; and did I not also promise that we should see each other again? Have I not kept my word?"

"Yes," replied the unhappy Max, "you have kept it so well that I long to leap from that window and drown myself in the river."

Perhaps the round white arm which clasped his own was more efficacious in preventing him from flight than handcuffs of the strongest steel. At all events, he was led to his chair, into which he literally fell inert and silent.

Leon de Tinseau.

MONA'S MISTAKE.

A water-lily fell at Mona's bare feet. She knew quite well what it meant. She knew whose boat was coming round the bend in the river, but she did not stir nor look up.

She was leaning against the old oak tree at the water's edge, and idly picking to pieces a spray of golden rod. The sunbeams sifted through the tree, and flickered over the dusky head, slipped down past the lowered lashes, kissed the dimples on the bare elbows.

The oars in the water ceased their regular splash, and the boat glided to where she stood.

The bits of golden rod floated by on each side.

"An', Mona, did ye have no greetin' for me? Why did ye come?"

Mona drops the last scrap of flowers and looks at him.

"Is it that you think I have come here to you?" she laughs. "Gerald, sure ye don't think that?"

"And why not?" he says, in an injured way. "I told ye Sunday I was goin' to the Shallows; didn't I ask ye thin to come down?"

"Perhaps," she says. "I have forgot. I came down to pick the cress; 'tis busy I am."

So she flashes one glance at him, and picks up her basket, as yet empty.

"Cress! Why, Mona," he says, "come, get ye into the boat. This cress is not half so lush as some a bit further. Come on," he urges.

"Well," she says slowly, "well." In reality she is longing to go, but, of course, it would not do to let him see it. "Ye needn't help me. I can get in."

Lightly he dips his oars, and they glide down the river. Mona laughs.

"They will be after me soon," she says. "Aunt Mollie will be a-callin' me, but she won't know, will she, Gerald?"

"No, colleen," answers Gerald in delight at the smiling face she turns on him. He rests his oars in the rowlocks and lets the boat drift.

"Mona," he says, bending towards her, "Mona, listen——"

"An' won't I catch it, too!" she says with a peal of laughter, as though catching it would be a festive occasion. "Here's the place; yes, Gerald?"

"Yes," he answers moodily. "Wait, I'll get the stuff; ye needn't move."

She catches hold of the bending branch of willow and draws the boat close inshore. One small, bare foot swings back and forth in the water as she balances herself on the prow and hums softly to herself. She knows he is angry; she guesses what he had started to say to her a moment ago, but what does she care for that? The lips are demure and serious as she thanks him, but the violet eyes are laughing.

"Gerald," she says when the oars commenced to move, "Aileen's here."

"Aileen?"

"Yes. She has the chance to see us now while Lady Lindores is at home. She is still my lady's maid, ye know. Aileen is, and it's myself would like to be in her place."

"Mona! Ye would like to go away from—from Kilgarnock?"

"Yes," she cried, "surely."

The boat's keel ran up to the landing place. She jumped out and then turned away with the basket in her hand. One glance she gave him over her shoulder.

"An' would ye care, Gerald?"

"Faith, 'tis not the likes of me she would be afther plasin'," he said to himself as he watched the little figure trip up the green sward and over the stile.

He forgot about the fishing expedition he had planned. He leaned back in the boat and fell to thinking. All the witches in the world are not yet suppressed; there are still some few left to tangle up the senses of a man and leave him in bewilderment.

The witch in Kilgarnock must have taken up her abode in Mona Carey's small head. To torment the lads of the village, to beguile and capture each unsuspecting heart, were accomplishments in which long practice had made her perfect.

Unlucky Gerald! All her life he had known her, even back to the time when she had begun to talk in broken baby phrases.

Although he was years older than she, Mona treated him in the same careless, laughing way in which she did all the other suitors. And though not one of them could boast of any especial mark of favour, yet each one believed himself to be ahead in the race—each one except Gerald Sheen.

Daily he questioned himself, tried to understand her; "but no," he thought bitterly, "it's an omadhaun I am; she laughs at me."

With all the love of his passionate Irish nature, he worshipped pretty Mona, who would look at him so

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roguishly from under long lashes and would not listen. And now he heard her voice calling:

"Lightfoot, Lightfoot, come up, come up; come to me, accushla!" and the twinkle of the cowbell echoed back again.

He pictured her sitting on the little stool and milking the cow; he knew how she would look—he had often watched her. The sleeves of her frock would be pushed up over her round arms; the dark rings of her hair would lie loosely over her head, and float against the dull dun of the cow's side. He imagined he could hear her talking and cooing to old Lightfoot, who seemed to him so unappreciative.

He remembered Aileen. She and Mona were about the same age, but so unlike in appearance that kinship would have never been suspected. While Mona was rather below the average height, Aileen was above it; Mona's curly tresses were black as midnight, and Aileen's bronze gold.

Lord Lindores, by whom Aileen was employed, one day announced that he would give a dance and bountiful supper to the people of the village.

Mona slipped down to the river in glee at the good news Aileen had just brought to her. She swung herself up to a limb that reached half way over the water, and scrambled recklessly out upon it till the bough swayed.

"Come here, Gerald, jist as quick as ye can!" she calls, quivering with excitement and splashing the water below with impatient heels.

"Comin'," he answers. "Sure, Mona, what is it? Is the cow after dyin'? Or the pigs stole? Tell it, colleen."

"The cow!" she says, her eyes dancing. "Oh, Gerald, it's me feet I can't kape sthill long enough to spake wid me tongue. The dance we're goin' to have in the new barn to-morrow night; ye didn't know that now? I have come jist to tell ye uv it."

"And is that all?" says Gerald, as he rests his oars and looks at her surprised. "An' I thought, Mona, ye had a thing to tell and afeared the news. A big bite I lost, too, for whin ye called so fast I didn't bide to finish."

"Well, ain't ye glad now, Gerald, for me to tell you?"

"Faith an' I knew that same already. It was no news to me, Mona."

Mona's red lips pouted.

"Go back then, Gerald, to your fishin'; 'tis not for me to bother ye."

Gerald surveyed her with an odd expression on his face.

"Look, Mona," he said, drawing a little bundle from the pocket of his corduroy trousers.

"See what I am goin' to ask the purtiest gurrl in Kilgarnock to wear to-morrow night." And he carefully unrolled a wide pink silk handkerchief, and held it up for Mona's inspection.

The little maid clasped her hands in admiration. She had nothing like it, and never doubted that it was intended for her.

"'Tis beautiful, sure, Gerald."

He craned his neck round to one side to behold the kerchief from her point of view.

"Yes," he said calmly, and then folded it up very carefully in its tissue wrappings, and put the bundle back into his pocket.

"Good-bye, Mona," he called, bending over his oars again.

She did not answer, but stared rather blankly at the little boat till it disappeared.

"Indade, thin, I don't care if it's not for me. I wouldn't have it," shaking her head, and speaking emphatically, "I wouldn't have it at all, at all."

When the next evening came the barn was full of life and laughter.

Mona looked in one direction and then another for Aileen, and at last found her sitting close to a window, and near by stood Gerald, gazing at her.

Mona turned a little pale. She did not see Patsy and Barney and Farron edging up to her; she never even thought of any of them. In her eagerness to make no mistake she stood up on tiptoe to see the better. Yes, it was Aileen, and now Gerald was leading her out to dance. The pink silk handkerchief was round her neck!

Something seemed to shoot across Mona's eyes with a blinding pain. When Barney begged her to dance she answered a little sharply, and he went away again.

"It is too warm here, aunt, just now," she said to Mrs. Kelly.

"Go stand in the cool a while, child," said her aunt. "There's Aileen coming over here; bide a bit."

But Mona was gone. Not under the trees did she stop, not by the little gate. Swiftly she passed out the side way, over the dusty road and into her own road. Here she paused a moment and, catching her breath with something that sounded like a sob, passed round the tiny thatched hut, and so over the stile to the river.

Down on her face upon the grass she threw herself, careless of the yellow sash of which she had been so proud. The yellow beads burst their string, and some rolled down the bank into the river. She lay very still and quiet, that a nightingale gave her no heed, and began to sing.

A whip-poor-will called on the opposite bank, and far off in the woods came the answer of his mate. The gleaming moon rolled slowly into view, and silvered each branch and blossom.

The birds sang on, but Mona heard them not. She was thinking—one hand on the heart that beat so fast, the other arm pillowing her head. She did not try to analyse her feelings; she would not have known how. There was a dull ache in her breast, and memory was torturing her.

"Holy Mother," she began, whispering, and could get no further.

She thought how unkindly she had always treated Gerald, and she laughed then to herself.

"Och, wirra, wirra," she ejaculated.

And now Aileen had taken him. It was Aileen's fault, not Gerald's. How could she do it, how could she?

"And wear his kerchief—the prettiest girl in Kilgarnock." Those were his words; and now she knew what he had meant. Oh, why had not Aileen stayed away! And now Gerald was gone from her entirely.

Slowly she made up her mind that she would be brave; no one—not Aileen nor Gerald—should ever know the truth. Gerald should never know she was sorry now, and so he would be happy. She murmured him a farewell in soft Irish words:

"Gerald, anoon, ma Gerald."

Then she fell asleep, worn out with her misery.

The bird at last hushed his sweet treble and flew away. He had heard a hasty step over the grass. But Mona heard not, saw not.

Somebody came down to the river bank almost on a run, and stopped short at sight of the little figure lying there so motionless. He knelt down beside her. With

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a quick eye Gerald noted the tear-stained cheek, the parted lips, whence came a long, long-drawn sobbing breath.

Without a word he gathered her up in his arms, asleep as she was, but Mona stirred, and then started from him wide awake.

"I—you—oh, Gerald!"

"They are all huntin' for ye," he answered. "Ye have scared the heart 'av me. An' why did ye come down here?"

"Don't," she whispered, trying to remember her resolution. "I will go back now."

She stood up, and then swayed a little dizzily.

"Mona, mavourneen!" said Gerald, holding her close.

She struggled to release herself, and stood back from him pitifully defiant.

"Ye shall not touch me!" she cried. "Go back to Aileen; go back to her and spake your words. Tell her that same mavourneen story; she will believe ye. Let me pass; I can go home; I'll not need ——" but the proud curve of the lips weakened, and the eyes commenced to brim with tears.

She turned away her head, and tried to spring past him. Gerald stood motionless at first, looking at her in surprise, and then he caught her by the arm.

"Mona, stop a bit," he said, almost sternly. "What is this come to ye? What is Aileen to me? Are ye dhramin', child?"

"Let me go," she whispered, "let me go."

"No, I'll not let you go. Spake to me, Mona. What is it? Nay, ye cannot go. Tell it to me!"

She faced him then, and her eyes flashed through the tears.

"An' ye would talk to me, would ye? An' ye would wait for me to market; an' ye would sing to me under the thatch at night; an' ye would tell me ye loved me! Och, it is not thrue at all, at all. Ye knew I am spakin' but the truth, an' ye will make me say it. Ah, but the heart of ye is black. Aileen is there dancin', to-night; Aileen is there waitin' for ye with your kerchief round her neck—the pink kerchief ye showed me and said 'twas for the purtiest gurrl in Kilgarnock; go to her, go!"

The little figure was quivering with wrath and emotion, then she remembered all at once that she had broken her promise to herself, but having broken it she was not going to yield an inch.

"Shure, 'tis not that I care for ye, 'tis the base desate I hate. Let me pass now, if ye please!"

"An' I don't plase, Mona," he said. "Is that all? Now ye shall listen to me. Ye would never hear to me afore, Mona, 'tis not my fault. I do love ye, an' ye wrong me when ye say no. Shure, mavourneen, I love the very ground ye walk on, an' the sound of your voice is a music to meself. The kerchief—aroon, are ye angered with the poor purty thing? See, I have it yet for the purtiest and smartest gurrl in Kilgarnock. An' won't ye wear it now? I knew not even did Aileen wear one, an' 'twas not mine she had on her neck. Aye, bide your head; 'tis here on my heart is the right place for it. No tears, Mona; Mona, mavourneen; 'tis all right now. An' won't ye wear the poor kerchief, colleen?"

He drew it round her neck and held the ends close up under her chin. Presently she looked at him shyly from under lowered happy lashes.

"Ah, Gerald, 'tis too beautiful for me!"

G. W. Prescott.

AN EASY WAY TO EARN A WATCH.

On March 11th we wound up a watch and placed it in a safe. It was wound up somewhere between the hours of four and six in the afternoon. It is supposed to run down in about thirty-six hours. If you want this watch, which is a superior article, manufactured by **Mr. HENRY E. PECK, of 71, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.**, and sold by him at five guineas, all you have to do is to mark the time at which you think it will stop on the clock face herewith, and on the line left for that purpose. You may make any number of attempts for this prize, but each one must be on a separate clock-face.

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There is no entrance fee required, but no competition will be accepted unless traced on the diagram herewith.

In the unlikely event of two competitors being correct, the watch will be awarded to the competitor whose attempt first reaches this office.

Competition closes ***Monday, March 29th.*** Address attempts:

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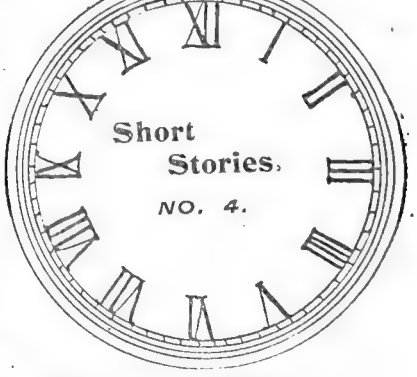

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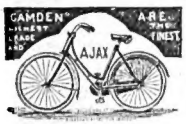

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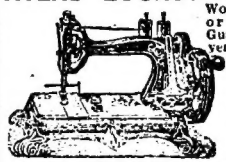
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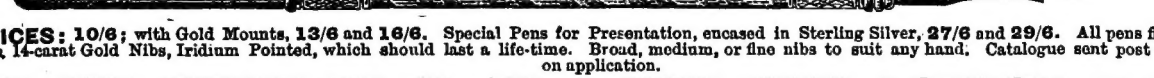
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Answers to Correspondents.

With the opening of Spring comes the opening of the Fresh Air Fund. An article on the subject appears on p. 401, and I would draw the attention of my readers to this, and ask them to tell their friends about the fund and its object. All subscriptions sent will be acknowledged in *Pearson's Weekly*, and the senders of sums over a sovereign will be presented with a pencil-case, if they wish. I hope that you will do your level best to assist the scheme this year, both by contributing yourself and by inducing others, equally generous, to do so.

Psyche.—Yes; it is quite true that priests have been forbidden to ride the bicycle in Paris. The reason is that on account of their ecclesiastical robes they rode ladies' machines and did not appear sufficiently dignified.

Peter J.—Queen Victoria rules over more Mohammedans than the Sultan of Turkey, over more Jews than there are in Palestine, and over more negroes than any other sovereign who is not a native of Africa.

L. T. P.—If horse-racing were abolished quite 20,000 people would be thrown out of employment.

F. G. K.—The British have won 82 per cent. of the battles they have fought. This is a better percentage than that of any large nation.

R. S. G.—Sounds can be heard distinctly twice the distance on water that they can on land.

Gertrude.—No; the orange blossom is not at all universally worn by brides. In Italy and some parts of Switzerland white roses are worn, in Spain red roses and pinks, and in Greece brides adorn themselves with vine-leaves.

D. G.—A healthy man to be correctly proportioned should weigh twenty-eight pounds for every foot of his height.

M. M.—There are three places in the world possessing the phenomenon green snow. One of these is near Mount Hecla, in Iceland, another fourteen miles east of the mouth of the Ohio, and the third, Quito, in South America.

W. H.—France is the greatest snuff-taking country in the world. I am glad to say this habit is fast dying out in England.

Gardener is anxious to know if there are any means by which he can arrest the ripening of fruit.———Experiments have been made to accomplish this by means of the refrigerating process. Apples were the only fruit, however, in which the experiment was successful.

J. M.—The Forth Bridge is constantly being repainted. So vast is the structure that it takes fifty tons of paint to give it one coat, and the area dealt with is something like 120 acres.

Furrier.—The reason that the skin of the Polar bear is mutilated in the way you mention when sent to England to be cured is owing to a superstitious belief among the Esquimaux, that, if when a Polar bear is killed his nose is not cut off and thrown upon the ice, bad luck will be sure to follow the hunter.

H. G.—It is the skin of the fruit which gives colour to wines. In the case of white wines, the skins are removed before fermentation.

D. W. B.—To find out if you are well formed, you should stand close up to a wall with your face towards it. The chest should touch the wall, the nose should be four inches away, the thighs five, and the tips of the toes three.

Clerk.—A good way to soften new pens is to hold the nib over a flame of some description for a few seconds and then dip it into water.

Eugene asks: "Is it possible that the smell of flowers could have the effect of making one hoarse?"———The fact has, I believe, been noticed by singers. The smell of freshly-cut flowers and artificial perfume in a much smaller degree will often produce temporary loss of voice. The violet, of all flowers, is supposed to be the worst offender, while tuberose, mimosa, lilac, and hyacinth, are all bad. A bouquet composed of these blossoms might, if presented at the end of a performance, make some prima donna hesitate whether to regard it as a compliment or otherwise. This would be very funny.

P. C.—The coldest hour of the day is generally considered to be five o'clock in the morning.

Ethel.—Tea is not so injurious when made from hard water as when made from soft.

Postman.—About forty tons of letters pass daily through the hands of the officials of the General Post Office.

Nellie.—(1) Yes. Most nations have a typical national flower. The following are a few that may be new to you: Greece, the violet; Germany, the cornflower; Spain, the pomegranate; Prussia, the linden; Egypt, the lotus; and Saxony, the mignonette. (2) No more stories of that sort, please.

R. W.—The room to which you refer is in the Imperial Palace at Petersburg. It is 100 feet long by 150 wide.

D. C. L. writes to ask me if I can tell him the reason bees prefer working in the dark.———This is due to the fact that sunlight causes the sugar to granulate out, and so to solidify the whole mass, when, of course, it is useless to them.

O. I. C.—A good method of restoring the perfume of flowers is to place them in a mixture of sugar and water. *Home Notes Bouquet* will do the same thing, too, and save the sugar.

The Laird wishes to know how the name of the Transvaal president is pronounced.———The correct pronunciation is "Krooyer." The "y" is pronounced as a letter which should be a cross between a "y," a "g," and a "j." If you want to make yourself understood though, you had better pronounce it "Krujer."

E. F.—The Viennese policemen are required to be able to swim, row a boat, and understand telegraphy.

Puzzled.—Certainly it is correct for a lady, after an introduction, to first acknowledge a gentleman in the street. Under no circumstances should he force his acquaintance upon her.

Guard.—If an express train moving at the rate of forty-five miles an hour were to stop suddenly it would give the passengers a shock equal to that of falling from a height of fifty-four feet.

D. D. B.—Surely there can be little doubt that bagatelle is a game of skill, although the element of chance in it is greater than that perhaps of billiards.

E. R.—I fully sympathise with you in your predicament. It is strange what a propensity Englishmen have for getting "hard-up," but the natives of India beat them in this respect. They put in pawn everything they can possibly lay their hands on, their lands, oxen, jewellery, their children, and even themselves.

G. P.—There are thirty thousand miles of telegraph in Great Britain.

Notice to Competitors.

In all Prize Competitions the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entertained when once a competition is finished and the result published.

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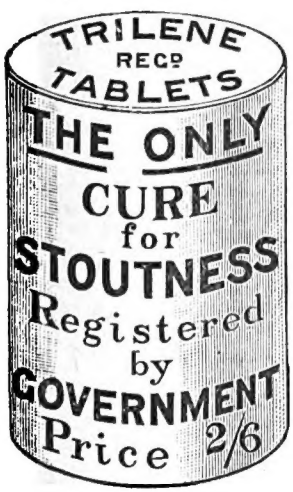

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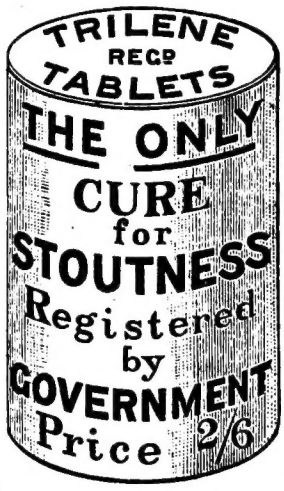

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MR. TAYLOR, Church Farm, St. James, Halesworth, says: "I have lost quite 2 stone since taking your Tablets."

"6, Brighton Terrace, Hull.

"MRS. JOHNSON has much pleasure in saying she has derived great benefit from your Tablets."

"8, Castle Road, Deal.

"MRS. J. PEARSON is glad to say she is much thinner."

Convalescent Home, New Brighton, Cheshire.

MISS S. J. PRITCHARD says: "They have done me good. I am 21lb. lighter already."

"Bretton West, near Wakefield.

"MISS L. LANGFIELD has taken a box of Tablets, and is already 7lb. lighter."

MRS. HUTCHINSON, 46, Irwell Street, Widnes, Lancashire, writes: "I have taken three boxes and am reduced a stone."

A. D. BILLINGS, Bell Inn, Aldershot, writes: "Have derived great benefit already. Less in size and weight, and breathing greatly improved."

25, Windsor Terrace, Penarth, Cardiff.

MISS M. FLAVELL says: "I have lost 2 stone, and am much better in health."

Extract from *Bury and Suffolk Times*, June 15th, 1894: "Miss Atherton sings and dances as piquantly as ever, and is a marvel of agility, considering how much flesh she has put on of late. Her friends should induce her to take a course of Trilene Tablets, about which I hear wonderful things. One portly acquaintance of my own by merely a few weeks' use of these little Tablets, has reduced his bulk perceptibly. I am assured the Tablets are harmless and tasteless, and that the Trilene Company in Finsbury Pavement, London, are doing an enormous and ever-increasing trade."

MR. GILLESPIE, 50, Chancer Road, Forest Gate, Essex, says: "I have lost just 3 stone."

2, Chariot Street, Hull.

MR. JUBB, Chemist, says: "My customers speak highly of your Tablets."

Windsor Hotel, Merthyr Vale, South Wales.

MR. J. THOMAS writes: "When I started the Tablets I weighed 17½ stone, and have got down to 14st. 9lb."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

MR. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17 stone, was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15 stone."

Aspern, 29, King's Hall Road, Beckenham.

MISS S. WOODHOUSE writes: "I have much pleasure in stating that your Tablets are really a safe cure for stoutness; they have cured me, and I am a perfect figure now."

MRS. GIBBON, of Radford Cottage, Bitterne, says: "I have derived great benefit from your Tablets, especially abdominal."

The Lady, October 8th, 1896 (giving advice to a reader who complained of stoutness), says: "The Trilene Tablets help to reduce stoutness, if taken daily; they are made of purely vegetable ingredients, and are quite harmless."

THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66, FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON.

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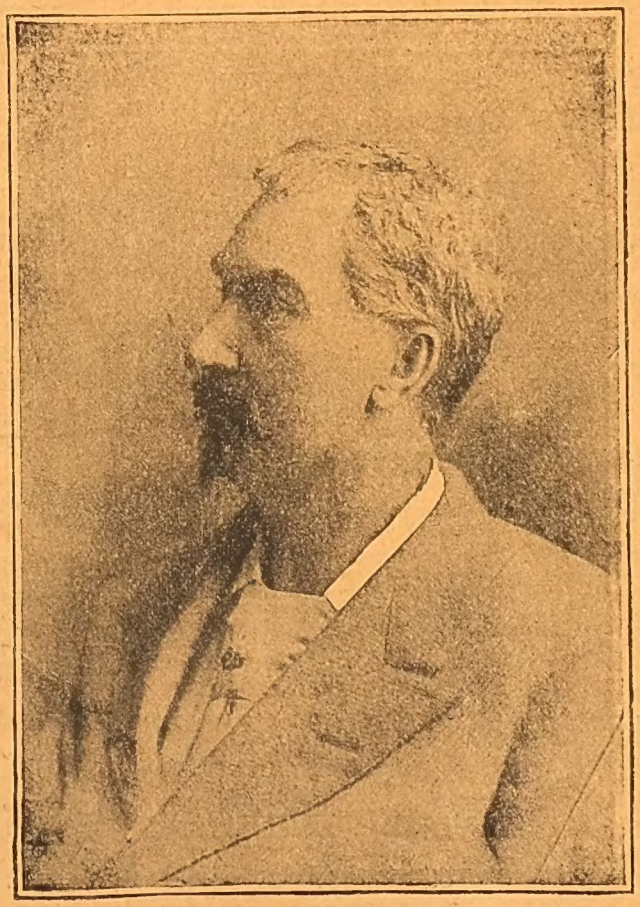
KOKO
FOR THE HAIR



Arundel Lodge,
Putney.
3/7/'96.

To the Koko-Maricopas Co. Ltd.,
11, Gray's Inn Road, London.

Gentlemen,—I am now *convinced* that without exception "Koko" is the best preparation possible for restoring hair. I was quite bald on the front, top, and back of my head, and I have now a fine crop of hair. I am strongly of opinion that if the Duke of Cambridge, The Prince of Wales and his good brother, knew your "Koko" they would use it.

You are at perfect liberty to make whatever use you think proper of this communication, and I am ready and willing to answer any question from anyone upon the subject.

Yours respectfully,
J. EDGHILL COLES.

P.S.—I enclose my photo, just taken, and I consider it a marvellous recovery of my hair, especially when you know that I am over sixty years of age.

"KOKO" Eradicates Scurf and Dandriff, Prevents Hair Falling, Promotes Growth, and is the Best Dressing for the Hair. Perfectly Harmless, Clean, Cooling, and Invigorating. 1s., 2s. 6d., and 4s. 6d. sizes, of all Chemists, Stores, Hairdressers, etc., or post free from

THE KOKO-MARICOPAS CO. Ltd.,
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